TCNJ Library Food and Drink Policy

Policy: Food is permitted only in the Library Café. Bottled water or drinks in TCNJ Library approved mugs are permitted in all areas of the library. Anyone observed with food or drink (other than in an approved mug) in the Library will be asked to dispose of it or to take it out into the Café located on Level 1 of the building. All library users are expected to adhere to these guidelines.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CAN I DRINK COFFEE IN THE LIBRARY?
WHY ARE SOFT-SIDED COFFEE CUPS NOT ALLOWED?
WHY CAN'T I BRING IN MY OWN TRAVEL MUG?
WHO CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF AN APPROVED MUG?
WHAT CAN HAPPEN IF A BEVERAGE IS SPILLED?
WHERE DO I GET AN APPROVED MUG?
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IF WE ARE GOING TO STUDY IN THE LIBRARY FOR SEVERAL HOURS, SHOULDN'T WE BE ALLOWED TO EAT?
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT NOT TO HAVE FOOD IN THE LIBRARY?
HOW CAN I VOICE MY OPINION ABOUT THE POLICIES?

CAN I DRINK COFFEE OR SODA IN THE LIBRARY?

Yes! Please do! Beverages, including coffee, soda or juice contained in a TCNJ Library approved mug are permitted in all areas of the library.

WHY ARE SOFT-SIDED COFFEE CUPS NOT ALLOWED?

Spill factor: While we want to allow you to have beverages in the library, some containers are more prone to spilling than others. If a soft-sided coffee cup is knocked over or dropped, the lid is much more likely to pop off than on other sealable containers.

Disposability: Soft-sided coffee cups, soda fountain cups, and aluminum cans are sometimes left on tables when students leave the library. This creates trash, but more importantly, eventually can invite pests into the library. These pests can cause long-term problems. Library mugs are not disposable and students do not normally leave these behind.
It's all in the content: Bottled water is always permitted in the Library. While water bottles could also cause large spills, water is less damaging than sticky liquids like coffee or soda. We realize that even approved containers can cause spills, but we are attempting to limit damage by restricting some of the more spill-able containers while still allowing you some freedom to consume beverages.

WHY CAN’T I BRING IN MY OWN TRAVEL MUG?

We are attempting to limit damage by restricting some of the more spill-able containers. This mug has been tested; when the lid is on, it is spill-proof. The purpose of this spill-proof mug is to keep the library clean for the entire TCNJ community.

As an added bonus, mug holders receive a discount on all fountain beverages and self-serve coffee purchases at The Rathskellar, FairGrounds, KinetiCart, the Lion’s Den, The Library Café, TDubs Dining, and the CStore.

WHO CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF AN APPROVED MUG?

Good Question! The answer is members of TCNJ community. Until last semester, bottled water was the only beverage allowed in the Library. We heard students’ requests for freedom to consume other beverages while studying. The approved mug originated through the combined efforts of LSAC (Library Student Advisory Council), Student Government (SG), Residence Hall Association (RHA) and Sodexo.

WHAT CAN HAPPEN IF A BEVERAGE IS SPILLED?

✓ Books and other library materials can be permanently damaged.
✓ Keyboards can be damaged.
✓ Laptops, loaned out by the library, can be damaged.
✓ Wired study tables can be damaged if liquid runs over the lip of the table and into the electrical or cable outlet.
✓ Carpet can be stained and is costly to clean.
✓ Armchairs or couches can be stained and often impossible to clean.
✓ Liquid can seep down into the power and data outlets in the floor.
✓ The damage is very costly to clean or repair.

WHERE DO I GET AN APPROVED MUG?

Sodexo distributes free mugs to all students on the Carte Blanche meal plan. Others may purchase a mug for only $6.99 at the C-Store, The Library Café, or the Lion’s Den. The library approved mug will display one of the following two designs:
WHAT ABOUT BOTTLED WATER?

Bottled water is always permitted in the Library. While water bottles could also cause large spills, water is less damaging than sticky liquids like coffee or soda.

IF WE ARE GOING TO STUDY IN THE LIBRARY FOR SEVERAL HOURS, SHOULDN'T WE BE ALLOWED TO EAT?

Fortunately, there are several buildings on campus where both food and drink are permitted while studying. Other than the Library Café, the Library is simply not designed for the presence of food or drink.

The library is not the same as a Barnes & Noble. Bookstores allow messes because it results in greater sales of books! Their custodial staff can handle the extra cleaning needed for food and beverage clean up. The size of our custodial staff is appropriate for a library, not an eating establishment.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT NOT TO HAVE FOOD IN THE LIBRARY?

Food results in crumbs and unclean surfaces for other Library users. The crumbs attract rodents and insects that can cause long-term problems.

HOW CAN I VOICE MY OPINION ABOUT THE POLICIES?

The Dean of Library has met with SG representatives to discuss concerns of students who use the library. In addition, the Library Student Advisory Council meets regularly during the academic year with the Dean and other library staff to discuss issues and concerns. You may voice your thoughts by speaking with a member of Student Government, a member of LSAC, a library staff member, or by contacting the Dean of the Library.

THANK YOU

Thank you for reading this message and considering the factors that have led to the current policy.