

## **BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY CIRCULATION POLICY**

**The Bethlehem Public Library supports the right to have access to ideas and information representing all points of view. It is the policy of the Library not to forbid or impede the circulation of items from the library collection to any of its cardholders in good standing based upon the cardholder's race, creed, national origin, age, place of residence, or other personal criteria.**

**The Library adheres to New Hampshire's Library User Records Confidentiality Law (RSA 201-D:11), which protects the privacy of all borrowers, regardless of age.**

### **I. Library Card Eligibility**

The Bethlehem Public Library is supported by Bethlehem tax dollars. Those persons whose tax dollars support the Library, directly or indirectly, are entitled to a library card at no additional cost.

Those eligible for a no-cost library card include:

- A. Bethlehem residents age 6 and older.
- B. Employees of the businesses in Bethlehem, though they may reside outside of Bethlehem. Proof of employment, such as a pay stub, is required. Business cards are valid for one year, but may be renewed with proof of employment.
- C. Teachers at all schools in Bethlehem.
- D. Individuals who own property in the town of Bethlehem but reside outside of Bethlehem.
- E. Profile School students, though they may reside outside of Bethlehem, may have a card until graduation.
- F. White Mountain School students, though they may reside outside of Bethlehem, may have a card until graduation.
- G. Libraries in New Hampshire (for the purpose of inter-library loans).
- H. Residents of residential facilities in Bethlehem may be issued a temporary card for two months. Cards can be renewed as needed for an additional two months at a time. Individuals must show identification and proof of residency (mail received in Bethlehem or a letter from the facility management). Temporary cards have a checkout limit of two items.

An annual non-resident card may be purchased by permanent residents of surrounding towns. Non-resident card fees are reviewed by the Library Trustees and adjusted according to the per capita portion of the Town's operating budget which supports the Library.

Those not eligible for a library card include vacationers and other temporary renters.

## II. Library Card Registration

**By registering for a card, borrowers agree to be responsible for all materials borrowed on their card, and to abide by all lending rules, policies and regulations of the Library.**

- A. All individuals applying for a card must complete a registration form, show identification with current name and current physical address.
- B. Applications for a child's library card (prior to 7<sup>th</sup> grade) must be signed by a parent or legal guardian at the Library. Parents must show proper ID or valid Bethlehem Public Library card before a child's card will be issued.
- C. All cards will be issued at the time the patron applies, assuming all of the above requirements are met.
- D. For the first two library checkouts, individuals will be limited to no more than two items.
- E. With the exception of temporary cards, the library card will be good for two years.
  - i. Renewal is required to verify contact information and ensure eligibility.
- F. Online registration is accepted for a temporary card, in order to utilize downloadable books. Patron must come in to the library within 60 days to complete registration and obtain a permanent card.

Patrons are encouraged to present their cards at the circulation desk for the most efficient service. Library staff may ask to see some identification before checkout of materials to a person who has forgotten his/her library card if that person is not known personally.

Patrons are responsible for notifying the Library of any change of address, email address, name or phone number.

Cardholders are responsible for all items checked out on their cards. Parents and guardians of minors are responsible for their child's items checked out.

## III. Library Cards: Children and Families

Children are eligible for their own library cards when they reach the age of six years. The privilege of having their own library card is granted to children at this age because it is felt that they can be more responsible about proper use, care, and return of library materials. Beginning in seventh grade, minors can apply for their own card without parents' permission.

Privacy Law RSA 201-D:11 allows the same privacy protections of children who have their own card as those of adult patrons. This includes a right to privacy of items on hold, titles of checkouts, and reasons for fees.

Parents and/or guardians are financially responsible for all items checked out on the child's card until the child reaches age 18.

As an alternative, the Library offers a family library card. All members of the family share one library card number and all are entitled to borrowing information, including items on hold, titles of checkouts, and reasons for fines.

#### **IV. Loan period:**

- A. Books, audio books, videos and magazines, inter-library loans: 14 days
- B. Telescope and other kits: 7 days (see kit policies for full details)
- C. eBooks and electronic resources: loan periods are generally set by the vendor and vary by resource.
- D. A longer checkout period may be given at patron's request and discretion of the Library Director.
- E. Non-circulating material includes the current week of weekly magazines, library laptops and iPads, and some historical holdings deemed irreplaceable or fragile.

#### **V. Renewals**

- A. Most items may be renewed for two additional two-week periods as long as no reserves have been placed on them.
- B. Renewals may be made at the library, by phone, e-mail, or via the library's online catalog.
- C. Inter-library loans may be renewed only at the discretion of the Library staff in order to meet the loan arrangements of the lending library.

#### **VI. Reserves**

- A. Reserves may be made for any circulating materials.
- B. The first person reserving is the first person to be called when the item becomes available.
- C. Library staff will attempt to notify the patron of the filled hold by email and/or by phone.
- D. If the items are not claimed within five business days, the Library will contact the next borrower on the reserve list. The original borrower will be placed at the bottom of the reserve list. If there are no other reserves, the first borrower's reserve will be deleted and the item will be returned to the shelves.

#### **VII. Limits**

- A. The Library Director may impose limits on the number of related materials loaned to one library card when:
  - a. A collection is too small to answer demand
  - b. Interest creates an unnatural demand on one part of a collection
  - c. Risk/cost of excessive loss is prohibitive.

#### **VII. Overdue and damaged materials**

- A. Fines: There are no daily fines for overdue items. A donation receptacle is available at the circulation desk.

- B. A written reminder or email notice about overdue materials will be made biweekly or sooner.
- C. If the items are not returned after the written notice, a phone call reminder will be made.
  - 1. If a phone call is necessary, the patron will automatically be placed on Slow status for three months. Slow status allows for only two items checked out at one time. Slow status begins with the next checkout.
- D. If there is no response to the verbal request and the Library Director feels the situation has become critical, borrowing privileges will be suspended and an invoice for unreturned items will be issued.
  - 1. Borrowers will be assessed a \$2 processing fee in addition to the list price of any item.
  - 2. The Library will not accept replacements obtained by the patron. The Library purchases library-quality items through select library vendors that are generally not available to the public.
  - 3. If the borrower is a child, the parent/guardian's account will also be suspended.
- E. Depending on the monetary value and nature of the item(s), further action, possibly legal action, may be taken at the discretion of the Library Director.
- F. Damaged materials: if library materials are damaged beyond repair, the borrower may be invoiced for the list cost of replacing the material, plus a processing fee. Borrowing privileges may be suspended until the invoice is paid.
- G. Borrower may appeal a suspension of privileges to the Board of Trustees.
- H. Suspension will be lifted when the matters causing the suspension have been resolved.

**RSA 202-A:24 Offenses Against Libraries.** – Any person who shall willfully or maliciously deface, damage or destroy any property belonging to or in the care of any gallery or museum or any state, public, school, college, or other institutional library, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. Any such person shall forfeit to or for the use of such library, gallery, or museum, three times the amount of the damage sustained, to be recovered in an action in the superior court.

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