

Charlton Public Library

Library Use / Patron Behavior Policy

The Staff and Trustees of the Charlton Public Library encourage persons of all ages to use its facility, materials, and services. To ensure a safe, comfortable environment for Library visitors and staff, the following policies and procedures have been established.

Policies

1. Disruptive or inappropriate behavior is prohibited in the Library or on Library grounds.

Disruptive behavior is defined as any destructive or continuing activity by any individual or group of individuals which infringes on, or interferes with, other patrons' rights to access and use the Library or staff members' performance of their duties. Anyone engaging in such behavior may be given warnings, directed to other parts of the building, or required to leave the building for a specific time period or banned from the premises.

The following behaviors are prohibited in the Library or on Library grounds:

- Smoking, vaping, using e-cigarettes
- Using, possessing, distributing, or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Creating disruptive noise, shouting, using inappropriate language
- Cell phone or audio equipment use to the extent that it disrupts other Library users
- Running, hitting, throwing items, or engaging in inappropriate physical contact
- Destruction or defacement of Library, patron, or staff property or materials
- Harassment or intimidation, in any form, of patrons or staff members
- Commercial solicitation or distribution of materials
- Interference with other patrons' use of the Library
- Blocking, or impeding passage through, building entrances/exits
- Intrusion on other patrons' privacy
- Interference with staff members' performance of their duties
- Leaving personal belongings unattended
- Leaving children under age ten (10) unattended in the Library or on Library grounds.
- Use of bicycles, roller blades, skateboards, scooters, or other similar equipment in the Library or on Library grounds; bicycles must be parked in the bicycle rack.
- Inappropriate use of Library computers or network (see Computer & Internet Use Policy)

2. Food and drink in the Library:

- Food is not permitted in the Children's Room or the Adult/Teen Room.
- Light refreshments may be consumed only in designated snack areas. Consumption of smelly or messy food is prohibited in the Library out of consideration of other visitors.
- Drinks in covered, spill-proof containers are allowed anywhere in the Library.
- Areas must be clear of trash, crumbs, spills, etc. after consumption of food.

3. Shoes and shirts must be worn in the Library at all times.

4. Animals, other than service animals, are not permitted in the Library (see Animal Policy).
5. Patrons whose bodily hygiene is offensive so as to unreasonably interfere with another person's use of the Library may be directed to leave the building and to remedy the situation prior to future visits.
6. All materials must be checked out before leaving the building.
7. Parents or guardians are solely responsible for the supervision and behavior of their children. No child under the age of ten (10) may be left unattended in or at the Library at any time.
8. Personal property may not be left unattended. The Library shall have no liability for damaged or lost personal property.
9. Disputes regarding another patron's behavior must be brought to the attention of a staff member rather than interacting directly with the patron.

Procedures

Library staff have the authority to interpret and apply these rules for the benefit of the public. Any patron violating the above rules will be given a verbal warning by the Library Director or the Director's designee. After a verbal warning, subsequent violations may be cause for progressive suspension of Library privileges. Suspensions will be for a specific time period, and the person whose privileges have been suspended will be notified in writing of the suspension.

Before any suspension is imposed, the Director or Director's designee will:

1. inform the person of the observations of staff or allegations by a third person or persons upon which the Director/Director's designee is considering a possible suspension in sufficient detail to allow the person to respond. When circumstances warrant, the notice will be in writing.
2. afford the person an opportunity to respond.
3. Except as provided below, no decision will be made before the foregoing has been done.

In the case of an alleged offense:

1. which the staff reasonably views as posing a threat to the health or safety of any person or to Library property and where there is no reasonable opportunity to provide advance notice and an opportunity to be heard as provided above; or
2. where the accused refuses to listen to or read the grounds for possible suspension,

the Director/Director's designee may impose an immediate suspension for such period as is reasonably necessary to provide such notice and opportunity, or, in the case of a refusal of the

accused to listen to or read the grounds, until such time as the person has done so and been given a chance to respond and the Director or Director's designee has made a decision.

Any suspension of Library privileges longer than one day may be appealed to the Library Board of Trustees. Notice of an appeal should be made in writing to the Library Director as soon as practicable and no later than two weeks after receipt of notice of suspension. The Library Director will forward the notice to the Board of Trustee Chair without any avoidable delay and, once known, will inform the appellant of the date of the meeting at which the appeal will be heard. Please note that short term suspensions may end before an appeal can be heard due to the legal requirements of posting Board meetings.

If staff feels there is potential for danger to other patrons or staff, police will be called for assistance.

This policy is not intended to waive any other rights or remedies which the Town of Charlton, the Charlton Public Library, or Library Board of Trustees may have, and is instead intended to be, and shall be, in addition to any and all other such rights and remedies. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, by way of example only, the town, Trustees and Director reserve the right to have serve and enforce a No Trespass order in the event that a person whose privileges have been suspended were to enter the library.

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on 3/5/2016

Amended and approved by the Board of Library Trustees on April 20, 2023