



## Patron Behavior Policy

It is the mission of the Westborough Public Library to create a welcoming, inclusive environment for all members of our community who use our facilities and library services. In order to ensure that our library is equitable and open to all, to protect the rights and safety of library patrons and staff, and to preserve and protect library materials, equipment, facilities, and grounds, it is important that library users be considerate of the rights of others and use the library in a safe and non-threatening manner.

The Behavior Policy covers behavior on Library property, including the restrooms, meeting rooms, and public spaces. Outside, it includes any areas adjacent to the building: entrances, courtyard, lawns, and parking lots.

### **Guidelines for Library Use:**

- Ask for help when needed or if you are not finding the resources you need.
- Be considerate of others.
- Respect the staff, facility, equipment, and materials.
- Be responsible for your children.
- Be responsible for personal belongings; do not leave them unattended.
- Keep lids securely on beverages and enjoy food in designated areas.
- Follow staff directions.

### **The following activities are not allowed:**

- Interfering with another patrons' right to use the library or with the staff's performance of their duties.
- Creating a disturbance by making noise, talking loudly, or engaging in other disruptive behavior including using speaker phone and video conferencing (MGL, Ch. 272, Sec. 41).
- Engaging in conduct or speech which is intimidating, harassing, or threatening to any patron or staff. This includes the use of profanity and hate speech, stalking, staring, unwelcome contact between people, and invasion of personal space.
- Carrying firearms and dangerous weapons of any type (except by law enforcement officers).
- The use of drugs and alcohol including but not limited to smoking, vaping, e-cigarettes, and all other tobacco products in the library or on library grounds. Persons appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave the library.
- Bringing animals into the library, except those needed to assist a patron with a disability (MGL, CH.272, Sec. 98A) Emotional support or therapy animals are not covered under the American with Disabilities Act and hence, are not allowed. Exceptions may be made during approved library programs that utilize animal ambassadors.

- Misusing the restrooms, e.g. using them as a laundry or bathing facility and improper disposal of diapers.
- Soliciting or canvassing of any kind.
- Non-staff entering staff work areas without permission
- Sleeping. Staff regularly conduct wellness checks and may need to report sleeping for health and safety purposes.
- Running.
- Engaging in sexual conduct.
- Use of the library barefooted, without a shirt, with offensive body odor or personal hygiene, or being otherwise attired so as to be disruptive to the library environment. Breastfeeding is not a violation. Exceptions may be made during approved library programs where removing footwear is part of the activity.
- Use of wheeled devices such as skateboards, roller-skates, bicycles, scooters, and shopping carts; devices that are allowed include wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, accessibility equipment, and other similar devices when used for their intended purpose.
- Viewing materials on library computers that are not appropriate for a public setting (See the Library's Internet Policy for more details.)
- Leaving children 11 years old or younger unattended. An attending individual is defined as a responsible person of at least 16 years of age. (see the Library's Child Safety Policy)

Those who damage or deface library materials or property may be prosecuted. (MGL, Ch. 266, Sec. 100). Parents can be held liable for damage done by a child under 18. (MGL, Ch. 231, Sec. 85)

Theft of library materials, use of false identification to obtain a library card, or use of another person's library card without permission is against state law. Violations may be prosecuted (MGL, Ch. 266, Sec 99)

For the safety of minors in the library, adults unaccompanied by children or teens are asked to remain in the general areas of the library unless they are actively using the materials or services in the children's area or teen room for purposes not served by the general areas of the building.

If a child, or anyone otherwise needing close adult supervision, has been left unattended in the library, staff will attempt to locate the caregiver. If the caregiver cannot be located, or if the library is closing, law enforcement will be notified.

Library facilities and grounds are public spaces except where designated staff only, and the library is not responsible for incidental photography, videoing or filming of visitors and patrons of the library. We ask that patrons be respectful of other patrons' privacy and refrain from taking photographs, audio recordings, or videos of library users without their permission whenever possible.

### **Enforcement of Library Behavior Policy:**

Library staff and, at the request of a staff member, Westborough Police Officers, are authorized to enforce these rules and regulations and may direct any person who has engaged in or is engaging in prohibited conduct or activity, to leave the library and its grounds. Any person refusing to leave, after having been directed to do so by a staff member or police officer, shall be subject to arrest or prosecution for trespass.

The Board of Trustees or the Library Director may impose sanctions against any person who has engaged in prohibited conduct or activity within the library or upon its grounds. Such sanctions may include restricting or suspending the individual's library privileges and/or prohibiting the individual from entering the library or its grounds.

Any person subject to and aggrieved by the imposition of a sanction may, in writing and within ten days of receipt of the notice of sanction, appeal the decision of the Library Director to the Board of Library Trustees. The decision of the Board, in such matters, shall be final. Any person, after receiving a notice of sanction prohibiting entry to the library or its grounds that enters the library or its grounds shall be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespass.

*Approved by the Westborough Library Board of Trustees July 2025*