



## **BEDFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY**

### **Behavior Policy**

**Summary:** All persons who want to use the Library are welcome, but no one may interfere with any other person's ability to use the Library, or staff's ability to provide services.

The Bedford Public Library is supported by the taxes of the people of Bedford who expect our facilities to be a clean, comfortable, and a safe place for selecting materials, reading, researching, studying, writing, and attending Library or community sponsored programs and meetings. To this end, the Library is responsible for establishing rules of conduct to protect the rights and safety of Library patrons, volunteers, and staff, and for preserving and protecting the Library's materials, equipment, facilities, and grounds. The Behavior Policy covers behavior on Library property, including the lobby, restrooms, meeting rooms, and all exterior and interior spaces, and any library program or service which takes place in a virtual space. Outside, it includes these areas adjacent to the building: entrances, lawn, benches, tent, parking lot, and sidewalks. The Library is considered a limited public forum.

The Children's Department is exclusively reserved for use by children aged 12 and younger, their parents, guardians or caregivers, and adults interested in children's literature. The use of this area for any other purpose is prohibited. Any individual unaccompanied by a child aged 12 and under shall not use or remain in this area for any purpose other than to promptly select literature for checkout or removal to other approved areas of the library. Any other use of this area by individuals over the age of 12 is strictly prohibited.

The Young Adult area is exclusively reserved for use by individuals aged 12-20, their parents, guardians or caregivers, and adults interested in teenage literature. The use of this area for any other purpose is strictly prohibited.

In the event of a public health emergency, persons are expected to follow the guidance of local health officials and any additional guidelines set out by the Library Board of Trustees. At any time, if a child or adult is too sick to attend school or work, they are too sick to be at the Library.

Persons should be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public library while in the building, such as reading, studying, listening, viewing, or using computers or other library materials. Those whose conduct is disruptive to library operations or to others' use of the library may have the privilege of using the library abridged or denied to the extent necessary to deal with the problem. Library visitors unwilling to modify unacceptable behavior as outlined in this Policy will be asked to leave the premises.

1. Behavior that is prohibited in the Library includes—but is not limited to—the following:
  - Any illegal act
  - Possessing or using alcohol or other controlled substances, or being impaired from use of such substances
  - Indecency
  - Vandalism
  - Engaging in harassing or threatening behavior toward staff or patrons, including staring
  - Soliciting, canvassing, interviewing, campaigning
  - Smoking or use of tobacco products, including vaping and e-cigarettes
  - Disrupting the orderly conduct of business
  - Loud or unruly behavior, such as yelling, swearing, hitting, etc.
  - Misusing computers or other equipment. Tampering with or changing configurations or software on Library computers, or displacing, disabling, or unplugging Library equipment
  - More than 4 people per table
  - More than 2 people per computer terminal
  - More than 1 person on single seat furniture
  - Running
  - Riding the elevator for no purpose but to ride; stopping the elevator without cause
  - Walking to & fro, in & out to the distraction of other library users
  - Obstructing any entrance, exit, or passageway, including access to the parking lot.
  - Sleeping or appearing to sleep
  - Lying down on the floor or the furniture
  - Placing feet on furniture, walls, woodwork, etc.
  - Causing excessive wear or damage to furniture
  - Rearranging furniture & library materials
  - Drinks without secure lids
  - Drinking at the computer terminals
  - Eating in the library
2. Materials must be checked out in order to be removed from the library. The Library reserves the right to inspect personal belongings for concealed Library material. Theft of Library material—or damaging or defacing material—may lead to prosecution under NH RSA 202-A or RSA 637.
3. Roller blades, roller skates, skateboards, scooters, or other such devices may not be used inside the library, or on any library property.
4. Persons in the Library are responsible for their personal property. Personal property should not be left unattended. The Library is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
5. Proper dress, including tops, bottoms, and shoes, is required at all times.
6. Parents and/or Legal Guardians are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children. Children under age 11 must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or other responsible caregiver, age 14 or older, while at the Library. Children under the age of 8 must be in the same room of the Library as their parent, legal guardian or caregiver. Please refer to our Child Safety Policy for more information.
7. Patrons whose bodily hygiene is so offensive as to constitute a nuisance to others' ability to use and work in the Library shall be required to leave the Library.
8. Service dogs, as that term is defined by The American with Disabilities Act are welcome so long as the service dog remains under the control of its handler at all times., . All other animals are prohibited.
9. Cell phones and other personal electronic devices should be silenced and cell phone calls taken outside or in the vestibules on the upper and lower level. Patrons should exercise good judgment and take care not to disturb other users.

10. Designated video conferencing space may be reserved for and by Bedford residents based on availability. Videoconferencing cannot be accommodated in any other area of the Library.
11. Light refreshments are allowed in the meeting rooms with use of the small kitchen on the lower level. All areas must be cleaned up after use.

Individuals with disabilities may request reasonable accommodation from any of the above policies by contacting the Library Director.

**Failure to comply with these rules may lead to revocation of library privileges.**

### **Consequences of Policy Violation**

Patrons engaging in improper conduct will be asked to cease that conduct, to move to another location or activity, or to leave the Library. In general, the least restrictive means which effectively deals with the conduct shall be employed.

Staff will handle occasional misbehavior informally.

Staff will take the following steps when dealing with frequent, egregious or escalating misbehavior:

1st Offense: Patrons who are behaving inappropriately or disruptively will be verbally warned that the behavior must stop. Patron will be handed a copy of the behavior policy. Staff member will document that a verbal warning was issued and a policy was received.

2nd Offense: The patron will be issued a written warning. Patron will again be handed a copy of the behavior policy. Staff member will document that a written warning was issued and a policy was received.

3rd Offense: Patron will be suspended from accessing the library for 3 months. A letter will be issued to the patron confirming the ban. If the patron is under the age of 18, parents or guardians will also be informed by a call from the library director.

4th Offense: Patron will be permanently restricted from the library with a letter of no trespass issued through the Bedford Police Department.

If patrons at any point in this disciplinary process refuse to cooperate, the police shall be called for assistance.

In extreme cases, no warning is required to expel a patron, if in the judgment of the library staff, the behavior in question (a) violates federal, state, county or municipal laws, or (b) poses an immediate threat to the safety or well-being of other library users or staff. Police will be notified by the supervisor on duty if the threat to the public or the staff appears imminent.

Patrons whose privileges are revoked may appeal to the Board of Library Trustees for reinstatement of library privileges. The appeal must be made in writing and will be addressed as part of the next regularly scheduled Trustee meeting.

Approved by the Board of Trustees, January 27, 2011

Revised June 26, 2014, July 9, 2019, September 18, 2023, June 7, 2024