



Patron Behavior Policy

Approved by the Joint Board of Library Trustees 12/9/2021

Purpose:

The Hamilton-Wenham Public Library strives to provide a comfortable, enjoyable, and safe environment for reading, studying, working, socializing, and enjoying programs. The purpose of this policy is to establish rules of conduct to protect the rights and safety of Library patrons, staff, and volunteers and for preserving and protecting the Library's materials, equipment, facilities and grounds.

Policy:

The following is not allowed:

- Engaging in any activity in violation of Federal, State, local or other applicable law or Library policy.
- Abusive or obscene language or behavior. Including confrontational and quarrelsome behavior, obscene language and inappropriate gestures or touching.
- Noncompliance. Disobeying the reasonable directive of a Library staff member.
- Harassment. Including, but not limited to, threatening another person by verbal or physical contact or sexual harassment of library patrons or staff.
- Use of computers to view obscene or pornographic internet sites (Please also see Computer Use Policy).
- Boisterous behavior. Including, but not limited to, running, horseplay, misuse of the restrooms or the elevator, or behaving in any other way that is disrespectful to Library patrons or staff.
- Noise. Including, but not limited to, talking or laughing loudly (above the normal, general noise level in the Library), using audible devices without headphones or with headphones set at a volume that disturbs others.
- Ringing Cell Phones. Patrons are asked to turn their cell phones to vibrate, especially if sitting at a computer or Library tables. Cell phone use in the Library is allowed as long as the noise level of the conversation adheres to the noise guidelines.
- Eating and drinking. Eating is not permitted unless provided in a Library sponsored program or event. Drinks in covered containers are allowed except for at computer terminals.
- Excessive displays of affection. Including, but not limited to, any sexual conduct or physical contact deemed inappropriate for a public space.
- Soliciting, canvassing, or loitering. All canvassing, soliciting, petitioning, and leaflet distribution is banned inside the Library facility.

- Bicycles and skateboards inside the library. Including, but not limited to, skateboards, roller skates, scooters, and wheeled shoes on library property or grounds are not allowed. All bicycles must be left outside on the bicycle racks.
- Improper attire. Shoes and shirts must be worn at all times in the Library.
- Poor hygiene. A person may be asked to leave the Library if their personal hygiene interferes with the orderly operation of the Library or the ability of patrons to use and enjoy the facility.
- Animals. Animals are prohibited in the Library except for trained guide and service animals or when they are part of a Library program. No pets or other animals are allowed inside the Library building.
- Using alcoholic beverages or drugs, exhibiting alcohol or drug intoxication, or selling alcoholic beverages or drugs.
- Smoking. Smoking, e-cigarettes, and vaping are not allowed in the building or within 100 feet of the entrances.
- Sleeping.
- Weapons. The carrying of any firearm or any weapon in the Library or onto Library property, except by law enforcement personnel, is strictly prohibited.
- Damaging, defacing, or stealing library property. All materials must be checked out before leaving the building.
- Leaving minors or vulnerable adults unattended in the Library (see Unattended Child Policy)
- Leaving personal belongings unattended. Personal possessions should not be left at public service points for safekeeping, nor should they be left unattended in public areas. The Library is not responsible for theft or damage of items left unattended.

Consequences of Disruptive Behavior:

For any patron violating the above rules the following steps will be taken:

- Patrons who are behaving inappropriately will be given one verbal warning by staff and asked to adhere the Patron Behavior Policy.
- Patrons who refuse to behave after one warning will be asked to leave the Library building and grounds and not return until the next business day. Repeat offenders may be asked to leave for a longer period of time.
- In cases in which a patron poses a clear danger to themselves or others, deliberately violates the law, or refuses to leave the Library after being instructed to do so by staff, the police will be called to assist in handling the situation.

Library staff will document all evictions and police notifications by completing an incident report.

If a patron is asked to leave for an extended period of time, a criminal trespass notice will be mailed to their home and filed with the police department. Any patron on criminal trespass notice who enters the Library building or grounds during that time is subject to arrest.

Any individual subject to disciplinary action, including by not limited to revocation or suspension of Library privileges, may appeal the decision the Library Board of Trustees in writing within 30 days of such decision.

Public Health Statement:

The Hamilton-Wenham Public Library follows directives of the Towns of Wenham and Hamilton, State Boards of Health, and the Governor of Massachusetts in regards to public health and safety. Patrons must comply with all Library health and safety guidelines.