

Patron Rights and Responsibilities

The Great Barrington Libraries support the rights of all individuals to:

- Receive friendly, courteous, and respectful service;
- Have free and equal access to information;
- Have a clean, comfortable, and pleasant environment; and
- Use the library undisturbed without threat of harm, invasion of property, interference, or discrimination.

The library is for everyone's enjoyment. The following guidelines for patron conduct are essential to ensure respect for individuals who use this public facility.

To ensure a clean, comfortable and pleasant environment, the proper use and care of all library materials and buildings is essential.

- Patrons shall not deface library buildings or property or improperly remove library materials, equipment, or furniture.
- Drinks must be in covered containers and shall be kept away from computers and other electronic equipment.
- Smoking is not allowed on library property. This includes the use of all e-cigarettes or any other nicotine delivery devices.
- Restroom sinks shall not be used for washing clothes, bathing or personal grooming. Only one person at a time is allowed in the restrooms, with the exception of a person attending a small child or an infirm or disabled person. Flushing of any materials other than waste and toilet paper is strictly prohibited.
- To maintain a sanitary environment and prevent the spread of disease, caregivers shall change diapers on the changing stations located in the public restrooms.
- Patrons whose bodily hygiene is offensive so as to constitute a nuisance to other persons shall be required to leave the building. This includes odors caused by perfume or cologne that unreasonably interferes with library user or staff comfort, safety and use.
- Camping or using library facilities or property for living or accommodation purposes is not allowed.

To allow for the safety of all patrons:

- Sidewalks outside and passageways indoors shall remain obstacle-free.
- Bicycles or shopping carts are not allowed in the building. (Mobility devices and occupied baby strollers/carriages are welcome.) Library patrons shall park bicycles and other vehicles only in authorized areas.
- The use of skateboards, rollerblades, roller-skates, scooters or hover boards is not allowed in the library, or on library premises. Hover boards may not be charged in the library due to potential fire hazard.

- Large backpacks, briefcases, parcels or other large bulky items may not block aisles and should not collectively exceed 22" x 14" x 9" (airline guidelines for overhead bin storage). The library is not responsible for unattended items.
- With the exception of animals used for educational purposes as part of pre-approved library programs, library patrons shall not bring animals into the library, except as required by persons with disabilities. The library may require the owner/caretaker to accept sole financial and legal responsibility for any injury, damage or other harm caused by a pet/animal.
- Fighting, challenging to fight, running, pushing, shoving, and throwing things are not allowed.
- Verbally or physically threatening or harassing other patrons, volunteers or staff, including stalking, staring, lurking, offensive touching, prolonged staring at or following another with the intent to annoy and obscene acts such as sex acts and indecent exposure are conducts that are not allowed on library property.
- Taking photographs of other library users without the permission of the individual and staff is prohibited.
- Masks are not allowed.
- Weapons shall not be brought into the library. Any object judged potentially dangerous by staff will be considered a weapon.
- Patrons shall promptly leave the library areas as they are cleared during closing procedures, and leave the Library at closing time.
- In order to prevent theft and to enhance the security of the library, upon reasonable suspicion, the library and its staff reserve the right to check all backpacks, knapsacks, and other items that may be used for carrying or transporting items, including weapons.

To ensure the safety of children, boys and girls under the age of 9 must be accompanied by a parent/caregiver who is responsible for their safety and behavior in the library. Responsibility for all children using the library rests at all times with the parent or assigned caregiver. Library staff cannot assume responsibility for unattended children. All children using the library must know how to reach a responsible adult in case of an emergency. Library staff will call the Great Barrington Police Department to escort children who have been left in the building after closing.

To allow for uninterrupted public service, library telephones are for staff use only.

To ensure individuals' rights to use the library free of disruption, library patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public library while in the building. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying, using library materials or services, attending programs or classes, or viewing exhibits may be asked to leave the building.

Library patrons shall refrain from:

- Disturbing others with loud or boisterous conduct

- Sleeping, lying down, napping or dozing in or on any floor, couch, table, or seat
- Soliciting or panhandling on library property
- Using profane, obscene, or injurious language
- Possessing, selling, distributing or consuming alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs
- Chaining or tying dogs to library property.
- Misusing restroom facilities in any way that prohibits others from accessing them
- Bringing library property into the restroom.
- Participating in behavior that poses a personal risk or risk to others

The following also guide patron behavior to ensure minimal disruption of others:

- Cell phone calls cannot be taken except in vestibule areas and should be kept as quiet as possible. Please turn off your ringer while in the library. Throughout the building, noise and talking are expected to be kept at low levels out of consideration for other patrons. Staff will remind patrons to be quieter if noise levels could be disturbing to others. Permission from a librarian is required before taking photos or videos.
- Patrons shall abide by established computer time limitations and *Great Barrington Computer and Wi-Fi Use and Access Policy*. The policy can be found on the website and at each Internet station before beginning each Internet session.
- Shirt and shoes are required.
- Patrons may not enter areas designated Staff Only without authorization.
- Patrons shall cooperate with library staff who must interpret and apply these guidelines.

Consequences:

Any violation of these Library rules or violation of local, state or federal law in the Library may be addressed in the following manner:

- Verbal Warning (e.g. Notification of violation and copy of Library Policies)
- Instruction to leave the Library immediately and not to return for the rest of the day.
- Suspension of borrowing privileges
- Suspension of Library privileges including removal from, and denial of access to, all Library services and facilities for up to one year.
- Criminal sanctions

The above remedies may be cumulatively applied. Law enforcement will be contacted as needed to ensure enforcement of these policies. Persons who violate these policies may have their photographs or video captured by the Great Barrington Libraries staff.

Disruptive behaviors which will result in immediate banning from the Great Barrington Libraries buildings and grounds include:

- Threatening staff and/or other library patrons
- Carrying an unauthorized weapon on library grounds or in library buildings
- Using abusive language toward staff and/or library patrons (including but not limited to profanity)
- Fighting (all parties) and any other forms of violence or threats of violence
- When it has been determined that the patron is a chronic behavior problem