



BETHEL PUBLIC LIBRARY

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www.bethellibrary.org

BETHEL PUBLIC LIBRARY PATRON BEHAVIOR POLICY

The primary purpose of the Bethel Public Library is to provide a comfortable and welcoming environment that will allow the Library's patrons to fully use and enjoy all of its resources. To accomplish this, the Library staff asks that its patrons conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful of others. While the Library Board of Directors and staff recognize the rights of all individuals to use the Library there are times when decisions must be made to protect persons and property. Therefore, under certain circumstances, the Library staff is authorized to remove and exclude individuals from the Library's premises. Patrons receiving homebound services must provide a safe and appropriate environment for volunteers who make deliveries to their homes.

SECTION 1: INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR WITHIN THE LIBRARY OR ON LIBRARY GROUNDS

Behaviors that constitute just cause for removal from Library premises, suspension and/or termination of Library privileges shall include but not be limited to:

1. smoking anywhere on Library property, except in designated areas;
2. sleeping, loitering, littering, soliciting, or being under the influence of alcohol or other substances;
3. talking in areas designated for quiet study;
4. use of food or drink or use of cell phones, except in designated areas;
5. viewing and/or displaying information or images that are obscene, pornographic, or harmful to minors (consistent with state laws and/or local standards) via the Library's public access computers, wireless connection, or through any other method;
6. skateboarding, in-line skating, fighting, boisterous behavior, use of foul language, running, pushing, climbing, obstruction of persons or vehicles, and other behavior determined by staff, in its sole discretion, to be disruptive;

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7. engaging in theft, vandalism or other criminal acts;
8. engaging in other behavior that interferes with the proper and established functioning of a public library, that threatens the safety and/or welfare of individuals, or that interferes with the enjoyment of the library and library grounds by other individuals.

In the event a patron's actions present an imminent danger to the life or safety of him/herself or others, he/she will be expelled from the premises immediately.

In the case of emergency situations, the Library reserves the right to expel patrons from the premises and is authorized to call upon other agencies (e.g. police, fire department, etc.) in order to protect people and property.

SECTION 2: CHILD BEHAVIOR AND SUPERVISION

The Library Board of Directors and staff view service to children as an important part of the Library's mission. Children are encouraged to use the Library for reading, study, research, quiet play, and attending programs.

However, parents, guardians, and caregivers should be mindful that the Library is a public building open to all individuals, and that unattended children are vulnerable. In order to provide for the general welfare of all persons using the Library, and in order to provide for the general safety of children using the Library:

1. All children under the age of 12 must be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible person (e.g. an adult or mature adolescent.)
2. Children 12 years and older may use the Library when unaccompanied by a responsible adult. However, parents, guardians, or caregivers are expected to be aware of the opening and closing times of the Library, and to make suitable arrangements to meet and/or transport their children. Inclement weather, power failures, and other unforeseen emergencies can and do occur, requiring the Library to open late or to close early. Children left alone in the Library or on Library premises could be at risk of danger.
3. Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for the safety and conduct of their children while they are on Library premises. The Library is not responsible for children who socialize on Library premises after closing.
4. The Library staff is not responsible for providing supervision and care for children while the parents, guardians, or caregivers are outside the Library or in another part of the building. The staff does not monitor children leaving the premises, nor is it

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- their responsibility to know if a child is leaving with a parent, guardian, relative, friend, or stranger.
5. Children are not allowed to go into staff areas including behind the Circulation Desk or other public service desks.
 6. Children are expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct as adults. Disruptive children are defined as children violating the Library rules and regulations as defined by Library policy. Disruptive children may be asked to leave the Library. In the cases of small children whose behavior might at times be disturbing to others, Library staff may request that the caregiver remove the child from the building temporarily.

Parents, guardians, and caregivers are referred to the Connecticut General Statutes Section 53-21a, which describes the legal consequences that can result from leaving children under the age of 12 unattended in a public place.

SECTION 3: CHILD SAFETY

Any public place can be dangerous for a child who is left alone or who is stranded after closing hours. While the Library staff does not accept responsibility for the safety, care, or supervision of an unattended child of any age, Library staff will appropriately handle issues of security and safety specifically related to minors.

SECTION 4: PHOTOGRAPHY AND AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING

Photographing, filming, and audio recording of Library patrons, Library staff, and Library interior or programs is prohibited without prior approval from the Library Director or his/her designee.

SECTION 5: ANIMALS

Only service animals assisting the disabled are permitted in the Library building. Animals may not be left unattended on Library grounds or by the Library's entrances or exits.

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SECTION 6: HOME DELIVERY SERVICES

Patrons receiving homebound services must provide a safe and appropriate environment for volunteers who make deliveries to their homes and patrons must protect all library materials while in their custody. Volunteers may choose not to enter a home, to leave a home immediately and/or to recommend suspension of the service unless the following conditions are met.

1. Pets must be confined, with the exception of service animals trained to assist a disabled person.
2. A clear and safe path to the home must be provided.
3. Any person in the home must be dressed in appropriate attire.
4. Any person in the home must not use abusive or obscene language, make obscene gestures or display obscene images to Library representatives.
5. Any person in the home must not threaten or harass the Library's representative.
6. If any person in the home is experiencing illness that may jeopardize the health of the Library's representative, the Library must be notified beforehand.
7. Any person must not be smoking in the home at the time of the Library's delivery.
8. Any person must not be engaging in any illegal activity in the home at the time of the Library's delivery.
9. Library materials must not be willfully defaced, mutilated or damaged while in the possession of the homebound person. The Library will assess replacement costs for any such damage.
10. Conditions in the home must be considered safe and sanitary by the Library's representative.

If a volunteer must leave the home, deny service or recommends suspension of service because the occurrence of any of the above, the volunteer shall provide the Library Director with notice of why such action occurred together with any recommendation for length of suspension of service.

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SECTION 7: POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE, AMENDMENTS, AND REVISIONS

This policy is effective upon approval of the Library Board of Directors. Amendments and/or revisions to this policy shall be formulated and recommended to the Board by the Policy Committee. The policy may then be amended and/or revised at the regular meeting of the Board, following the meeting at which the amendment and/or revision was proposed.

Approved by the Library Board of Directors January 22, 1990

Revised and approved:
May 1996
September 23, 2002
December 12, 2005
May 22, 2006
May 18, 2015
November 28, 2016