



Bethel Public Library

Be curious. Be enlightened. Be inspired.

BETHEL PUBLIC LIBRARY CIRCULATION SERVICES POLICY

SECTION 1: FREE AND EQUAL ACCESS TO LIBRARY MATERIALS

As part of this policy, the Bethel Public Library Board of Trustees adopts the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* (1980, revised 1996), its *Freedom to Read Statement* (1972, revised 2004), and its related intellectual freedom documents. These endorse free and equal access to Library materials for all people, regardless of race, creed, national origin, age, place of residence, or other personal criteria. It is the policy of the Bethel Public Library that no cardholder in good standing, whether a Bethel resident or a non-resident BorrowIT CT borrower, will be forbidden or hindered from borrowing any item in the Library collection based on strictly personal criteria.

SECTION 2: ACCESS TO LIBRARY MATERIALS BY MINORS

The Library staff and trustees are charged with the responsibility of providing free and equal access to Library materials and services to all eligible people. Moreover, it is impossible for them to know or predict the opinions of parents and guardians regarding the specific borrowing selections made by minor children.

It is the policy of the Bethel Public Library that parents or guardians, *not* the Library staff or trustees, are responsible for monitoring and approving the selection of materials made by minor children. It is the parents or guardians – and *only these* – who may restrict their children – and *only their* children – from borrowing specific Library materials. Parents or guardians who wish their children not to have access to certain materials should accompany or otherwise advise their children. The Library staff and trustees cannot and do not act *in loco parentis*.

SECTION 3: CONFIDENTIALITY OF LIBRARY CIRCULATION RECORDS

The Bethel Public Library recognizes that all Library circulation records are confidential as stated in Connecticut General Statute 11-25: “notwithstanding the provisions of Section 1-19, personally identifiable information contained in the circulation records of all public libraries shall be confidential.” (Please see Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records for further explanation.)

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SECTION 4: ELIGIBILITY TO BORROW LIBRARY MATERIALS

Bethel residents who have valid Bethel Public Library cards in good standing are eligible to borrow materials from the Library's collection. In addition, under the borrowIT CT reciprocal borrowing system of the public libraries of this state, residents of other Connecticut municipalities are eligible to borrow materials from the collection of this Library, provided they present valid borrower cards in good standing from their own hometown public libraries.

Out of state residents may be eligible to borrow materials from the Bethel Public Library. (See Policy on Library Cards and Borrower Registration.)

Library staff will be issued a Bethel Public Library staff card to borrow materials from the Library. All materials borrowed by staff must be charged out on the automated circulation system. Staff may not charge out an item that is on reserve for another patron. Staff are expected to return borrowed materials on time or renew them. Staff will not be charged overdue fines or fees but are responsible for damage or loss of library materials.

Any exceptions to these statements are noted below.

The Library may impose age requirements on the eligibility to borrow particular items, such as equipment, but these requirements will always be based on some reasonable consideration, such as replacement cost or usage complexity.

SECTION 5: LOAN PERIODS

- **Books:** Books are loaned for 21 days, unless labeled new. New books are generally 6 months old or newer and are loaned for 14 days.
- **Magazines:** Magazines are loaned for 14 days. Current editions cannot be checked out unless they are quarterly and it has been released for a month prior.
- **Audiovisual materials:** Compact disks, audio books, CD-ROMs, and other audio visual materials, except DVDs, are loaned for 21 days.
- **DVDs:** Feature film and fiction DVDs are loaned for 7 days. Nonfiction DVDs and DVD Series are loaned for 14 days.
- **Passes to Cultural Sites:** Passes to cultural sites may be borrowed for 3 days.

Under terms set forth by the Friends of the Bethel Public Library as donor, only Bethel residents, non-resident taxpayers, and members of the Friends of the Bethel Public Library may borrow passes to cultural sites.

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- **Interlibrary Loan materials:** Interlibrary loan items borrowed from other libraries for local cardholders may be borrowed for 21 days. Interlibrary loan items loaned to other libraries for the borrowing libraries' cardholders are loaned to the borrowing library for 42 calendar days.
- **Equipment:** Equipment may be borrowed for a loan period determined by the Library.

All other materials may be borrowed for 21 days.

Exceptions may be made to the above loan periods, with the approval of the Library Director, for reasonable purposes (such as seasonal heavy demand.)

SECTION 6: SPECIAL LOAN PERIODS

In order to satisfy the special needs of cardholders, items in the Library's collection occasionally may be loaned for special loan periods that differ from those specified above. Special loan periods may be granted by the Circulation Supervisor or, in his/her absence, by the staff member supervising the Circulation Desk at the time.

Up to 5 items may appear on a cardholder's record as borrowed on a special loan period at the same time.

Special loan periods should not exceed 6 weeks from date of loan.

The following items normally will not be eligible for special loan periods: items owned by the Library for 6 months or less, items on reserve for other patrons, interlibrary loan items loaned to the Bethel Public Library by other libraries, and books listed on the Bethel school system's required/suggested reading lists (during periods of heavy demand, as determined by the Library staff.)

Abuse of this privilege will result in suspension of this privilege by written notification.

SECTION 7: DUE DATES TO AVOID CLOSED DAYS

Library materials will not be made due on a day on which the Library is closed. Items will be due on the next Library business day.

SECTION 8: RENEWALS

Renewals may be made online, in person or by telephone. Passes to cultural sites, items on reserve for another patron, and equipment may not be renewed.

Interlibrary loan items borrowed from other libraries for local cardholders may only be renewed if permission from the owning library is obtained by Bethel Public Library staff.

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Overdue items may be renewed as long as the patron has not exceeded the maximum fine/fee limit. Renewal of overdue materials does not exempt the patron from payment of any associated fines or fees. Reference Loans, Limits, Renewals, and Overdue Fines Schedule.

SECTION 9: RESERVES

If the item or items wanted by a patron are checked out, he/she may reserve it/them using the procedures and forms established by the Library staff. Items may not be reserved for specific dates. The only exception to this rule is the passes to cultural sites, which may be reserved in advance for use at a later time. Otherwise, a reserve will be satisfied at the time the requested item becomes available. Some equipment is loaned on a first-come, first served basis, and may not be reserved in advance.

When a reserved item becomes available, the Library staff will notify the requesting cardholder. Reserved items of all types will be held aside for the requesting cardholder for 5 business days following the day of notification. Any reserved item not called for within this period will be given to the next requesting cardholder or, lacking further reserves, shelved back into the collection.

No reserve requests will be honored while a person's library privileges are suspended.

SECTION 10: QUANTITY LIMITATIONS

DVDs: No more than 10 children's titles per cardholder at one time.

Children's holiday books: No more than 5 per cardholder at one time during the appropriate season, at the discretion of the Children's Services Librarian, based on demand.

Audio books: No more than 10 children's titles per cardholder at one time.

No more than 50 items total may be checked out at any given time per cardholder.

SECTION 11: OVERDUE MATERIALS

Library patrons are responsible for returning borrowed materials on or before the due date. Returns may be made either in person or by using the book drop provided by the Library. Exception: equipment borrowed from the Library may not be returned in the book drop.

It is the policy of the Bethel Public Library to notify cardholders regarding the overdue status of Library materials in their care, as well as regarding overdue fines and/or replacement charges for non-returned items. The Library staff will determine notification procedures and forms.

SECTION 12: OVERDUE FINES AND FINE MAXIMUMS

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Overdue fines are 10 cents per day on most adult materials and 5 cents per day on most children's materials. On overdue DVDs, passes to cultural sites, and equipment the fine is \$1 per day. For equipment, the overdue fine is \$2 per day.

Fines are charged only for days the library is open.

In recognition of in-kind services rendered, current Library staff and volunteers are exempt from paying overdue fines.

Overdue fines are not charged to patrons receiving homebound delivery service.

Overdue fines are not charged to senior citizens, 60 years of age or older.

Maximum fines per item are \$5 on most materials; \$10 for DVDs and passes to cultural sites

A processing fee may be added to the fine if an overdue notice is sent to a collection agency.

No overdue fine is to exceed the cost to replace the item involved.

Maximum overdue fines are not to exceed \$40 per library card, the exception being charges for lost or damaged materials.

SECTION 13: REPLACEMENT COSTS

Library cards: Patrons will be charged a fee for replacement.

Library Materials: Patrons who lose or damage Library materials in their care will be expected to pay the cost to replace those items. The replacement cost for a lost or damaged Library material of any format will be the original purchase price of the item as recorded in Library records.

The Library recognizes the fact that library materials can be misplaced or mis-shelved and that some mistakes in record keeping can happen. Therefore, the Library will accept 1 (one) "claims returned" per patron within a 12 (twelve) month period, with a maximum of 2 (two) items included in the claim. After that if the item(s) cannot be located within the library, the patron will be held liable for the item(s). The same applies for library materials returned to the library via CT delivery services. This policy does not apply to equipment or inter-library loan materials (i.e. materials borrowed by the Bethel Public Library for the borrower from another library.)

Repairable materials: If the damaged item can be repaired, there will be a \$5.00 fee assessed. Any fines and other associated fees must also be paid.

Miscellaneous fees: There are additional fines for lost cases and miscellaneous pieces of items. The Library will determine this fine. Any fines and/or other associated fees must also be paid.

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Donation of a new copy of the lost or damaged item, or of a comparable replacement item for out-of-print materials, will be accepted in lieu of paying replacement charges. The Library will determine, in its sole discretion, what is a comparable replacement.

Overdue fine charges will *not* be added to the cost of replacement once payment for a lost or damaged Library material is made. However, the Library reserves the right to pass on any service fees incurred in attempting to retrieve long overdue items (such as collection agency charges.)

A cardholder who pays the replacement cost for a Library material lost while in his/her care will be given 90 days in which to locate and return the item to the Library in good, usable condition. Within this time period, upon presentation of a payment receipt, the cardholder will be given a full refund of the replacement cost paid. There will be no refund of fines or other fees paid. *If the Library replaces an item before the 90-day refund period expires, no refund will be given.*

SECTION 14: FINANCIALLY-RELATED BORROWER SUSPENSIONS

A Bethel Public Library cardholder will have his/her Library borrowing privileges suspended whenever he/she owes (\$20.00) or more in overdue fines/fees and/or replacement charges. Borrowing privileges will be suspended immediately upon borrowed equipment becoming overdue. Suspension of borrowing privileges from the Bethel Public Library may mean suspension of borrowing privileges from other libraries in the area and around the state.

At the discretion of the Library staff, payment of a maximum fine to remove a financially-related borrowing suspension may be delayed until a future date and the patron may be allowed to borrow materials in the intervening time.

SECTION 15: DISCRETION IN FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

The trustees and staff of the Bethel Public Library wish to provide excellent customer service. They acknowledge that the Library can make mistakes. They recognize that, when dealing with large numbers of Library materials and cardholders, unlikely circumstances and accidents can occur. Therefore, staff members are authorized to reduce or even to cancel overdue fines, replacement costs, and other charges owed to the Library by cardholders, if circumstances warrant.

The Library does not charge overdue fines resulting from the death, hospitalization, or serious illness of a cardholder or a member of the cardholder's close family (as determined by the Library staff.)

SECTION 16: 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

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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	<u>May 22, 1979</u>	
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