Sharon Public Library
community · literacy · technology
1 School Street | Sharon, MA 02067

LOST AND FOUND POLICY

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes procedures for handling items found on the premises of the Sharon Public Library ("the Library"), including inside the building, in meeting rooms, and on outdoor grounds. It applies to all Library staff, volunteers, and patrons.

2. PROCEDURES FOR STAFF

2.1 Logging Found Items

When an item is found or turned in, staff will record the following in the *Lost and Found log* at the Circulation Desk:

- Date
- Staff member's initials
- Description of the item
- Location found
- Date claimed, the signature of the claimant, and initials of the staff member who released the item (once resolved).

Completed Lost and Found log entries will be retained by Library Administration for one (1) year from the date of resolution (or, for unresolved entries, from the date logged), after which they will be securely destroyed.

2.2 Storage

Logged items will be placed in a designated storage area not accessible to the public. Perishable items are the exception and are disposed of the same day (see ***Section 3: Categories, Holding Periods, and Disposal***).

2.3 Attempting to Contact the Owner

If an item contains identifying information (such as a name, phone number, or library card), staff will make a reasonable attempt to contact the owner by phone or email. Staff will not access personal data on electronic devices or storage media in order to identify an owner.

3. CATEGORIES, HOLDING PERIODS, AND DISPOSAL

Holding periods and handling vary by item type, as summarized below:

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES	HOLDING PERIOD	DISPOSAL/TRANSFER
Items, Clothing, and Large Items	Umbrellas, water bottles, scarves, jackets, chargers, books, toys,	2 weeks	Donated to charity

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	bicycles, scooters, walkers, and skateboards		
Identification, Valuables, Electronics, and Cash	Wallets, credit cards, jewelry, passports, purses, phones, laptops, tablets, cameras, loose currency, and coins	Within 24 hours, or by the close of business on the last day of the Library's work week, whichever occurs first, given to the Sharon Police Department	Transferred to the Sharon Police Department within 24 hours
Digital Storage Media	Flash drives, external hard drives, memory cards	30 days	Disposed of securely
Perishables	Food, drinks, baby bottles	End of same day	Discarded by staff at close of business

4. CLAIMING AN ITEM

To claim a lost item, a patron must:

- Visit the Circulation Desk during hours of operation
- Reasonably describe the item and, when possible, state when and where it likely was left
- Provide identification, if requested by staff, for items of significant value.

Staff will verify the description against the Lost and Found log before releasing the item and will record the date and claimant's name. If the item was already transferred to the Sharon Police Department under *Section 3* or *Section 7.1*, staff will direct the patron to contact the Police Department directly.

5. UNCLAIMED ITEMS

Items not claimed within the holding period specified in ***Section 3: Categories, Holding Periods, and Disposal*** become the property of the Library and will be donated, discarded, transferred, or added to the Library's book sale inventory in accordance with the disposal method specified for that category in *Section 3*. Unclaimed cash will be transferred to the Sharon Police Department within 24 hours.

6. DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

The Library and its governing municipality are not responsible for personal items lost, misplaced, or left unattended on Library property. Patrons are solely responsible for their own belongings and are

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encouraged to keep items in sight at all times. The Library assumes no liability for damage, loss, or theft of personal property.

The Library reserves the right to use its discretion in determining whether items left behind in the Library or on Library premises will be retained for retrieval or immediately disposed of or transferred.

7. ITEMS OF SPECIAL CONCERN

7.1 Identification, Valuables, and Electronics

Wallets, purses, credit or debit cards, identification documents, passports, cell phones, laptops, tablets, cameras, and similar high-value or sensitive items will be transferred to the Sharon Police Department within 24 hours, or by the close of business on the last day of the Library's work week, whichever occurs first.

7.2 Digital Storage Media

Flash drives, external hard drives, and memory cards will be held for 30 days. In keeping with patron privacy, staff will not access files on such devices to attempt to identify the owner. Unclaimed devices will be disposed of securely after the holding period.

7.3 Firearms, Weapons, or Illegal Items

Any firearm, weapon, illegal substance, or item that poses a safety concern will be reported to the Sharon Police Department immediately and will not be stored on Library premises.

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APPENDIX A: LOST AND FOUND LOG

Maintained at the Circulation Desk pursuant to Section 2.1 (Logging Found Items)

Date Found	Staff Initials	Description of Item	Location Found	Action Taken (Discarded / Transferred to)	Date Claimed or Discarded	Claimant's Signature	Staff Initials (Released)

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