



Effective Date: 9-26-24

Patron Behavior Policy

The Sharon Public Library is supported by the taxes of the people of Sharon and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts who expect the library to be clean, comfortable, and safe for selecting materials, reading, researching, studying, writing, and attending Library or community-sponsored programs and meetings. To this end, the library is responsible for establishing rules of conduct to protect the rights and safety of Library patrons, volunteers, and staff, and for preserving and protecting the library's materials, equipment, facilities, and grounds.

The Children's Department is reserved for use by children, their parents or guardians, and adults interested in children's literature.

Enforcement of these rules will be conducted fairly and reasonably. Library staff, Library custodian, and/or Sharon Police will intervene to stop prohibited activities and behaviors. Failure to comply with the library's established rules, regulations, and policies could result in removal from the premises and expulsion from the library for a period of one day to one year, or arrest or prosecution. Violations could also result in the restriction and/or termination of Library privileges, including the use of Library computers and other equipment. Expulsion for more than one week may be appealed in writing to the Board of Library Trustees.

For the comfort and safety of patrons, volunteers, and staff, and the protection of Library property, the following actions are examples of conduct not allowed on Library property.

Engaging in any activity in violation of Federal, State, local, or other applicable law, or Library policy.

Carrying firearms and dangerous weapons of any type (except by law enforcement officers).



Being under the influence of alcohol/illegal drugs and selling, using, or possessing alcohol/illegal drugs.

Verbally or physically threatening or harassing other patrons, volunteers, or staff, including stalking, staring, lurking, offensive touching, and obscene acts such as sex acts and indecent exposure.

Recruiting, Proselytizing, or Promoting. Library-affiliated groups may promote the library and programs with the permission of the Director.

Soliciting or conducting surveys not authorized by the library.

Stealing, damaging, altering, or inappropriate use of Library property in Library facilities or on Library grounds, including computer hardware and software, printers, copiers, phones, and other equipment.

Trespassing in non-public areas, being in the library without permission of an authorized Library employee before or after Library operating hours, or camping on Library grounds.

Fighting or challenging to fight, running, pushing, shoving, or throwing things.

Creating disruptive noises such as loud talking, screaming, snoring, or banging on computer keyboards.

Gambling and group activities that are disruptive to the library environment.

Using audible devices without headphones or with headphones set at a volume that disturbs others. Using cell phones, pagers, and other communication devices in a manner that disturbs others. Cell phone and pager audible ringers must be turned off.

Bags and belongings must not be left unattended at any time. Patrons are responsible for their personal items at all times in the library. The Sharon Public Library is not responsible for missing personal items while in or on the grounds of the library.

Using restrooms for bathing or shampooing, doing laundry, or changing clothes.

Littering.

Smoking, chewing, and other tobacco use in Library facilities.



Entering the Library barefooted, or without appropriate clothing, with offensive body odor or personal hygiene, or being otherwise attired to be disruptive to the library environment.

Consuming food or beverages in public areas of the library, including restrooms. No food or beverages are allowed near computers. (Exceptions i.e., beverages in closed containers in areas authorized by library staff).

Bringing in garbage, articles with a foul odor, or articles which, alone or in their aggregate, impede the use of the library by other users. Trash receptacles in and on library property are not to be used for household trash.

Using wheeled devices such as skateboards, roller-skates, bicycles, scooters, and shopping carts on Library property or Library grounds, except in designated areas (exceptions i.e., wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers).

Lying down or sleeping in the restrooms or on any floor, couch, table, or seat in the library, and blocking aisles, exits, or entrances by sitting or lying down in them.

Putting your feet up on library furniture.

Neglecting to provide proper supervision of children.

Pets and Service Animals

Pets: The library does not allow pets in the building.

Service Animals: Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Massachusetts General Law c. 272, § 98A, businesses that serve the public, such as restaurants, hotels, retail stores, taxicabs, theaters, concert halls, and sports facilities, are prohibited from discriminating against individuals with disabilities. Among other things, these laws require businesses to allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals onto business premises in whatever areas customers are generally allowed.

Definition of a Service Animal: The ADA defines a service animal as a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. If the animal meets this definition, the animal is considered a service animal. The animal does not have to be licensed or certified as a service animal. State law protects dogs being used, or in training to be used as service animals.

The ADA requires that a service animal be under the control of its handler, and be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the individual's disability prevents using these



devices or these devices interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of tasks. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Staff may ask two questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform. Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Emotional Support Animals are not considered Service Animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Exclusion of Service Animals. A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove their service animal from the premises unless: (1) the service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the service animal is not housebroken. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain goods or services without the animal's presence.

A person with a disability may not be restricted to only certain portions of the public areas of a library when accompanied by a service animal.

Special Accommodations: If a patron requires special accommodations for the use of service animals, please contact the Library Director at 781-784-1578 x 1425.

Expulsion from Building/Suspension of Library Privilege

Failure to comply with the Library Behavior Policy may result in the patron being asked to leave the library; continued noncompliance may result in the suspension of library privileges. Any activities that are reasonably perceived as threats, harassment, or constituting illegal behavior may result in a call to the Sharon Police Department.

The Director delegates to Library supervisors, and by extension, Library staff, the authority to request a patron leave the building. Patrons who misbehave are generally given two warnings to comply with the policy, and if non-compliance continues, they may be asked to leave the building. Patrons asked to leave the building for disciplinary reasons shall be barred for the remainder of the day and/or evening.



Suspensions beyond 24 hours shall be determined by the Library Director and the Board of Library Trustees. Patrons are afforded a pre-deprivation hearing to contest the pending suspension. To justify a suspension of library privileges, the Director and the Board of Trustees must find/cite specific conduct on the patron's part that violates the Library Behavior Policy or state statute concerning public library access and use.

Notice of suspension will be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the patron or, in the case of a minor child, his/her parents, or guardian. A copy of this correspondence will be sent to the Town Administrator.

The appeal of the suspension may be made, in writing, to the Board of Library Trustees, Sharon Public Library, 11 North Main Street, Sharon, MA 02067-1299, within ten (10) days of receipt of the notice. The patron, or in the case of a minor child, the parents or guardian, will be notified by the Board of the date and time of the hearing on the notice of appeal.