

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY:

Members of the public are to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that does not interfere with the nature of the library's programs and services. The library provides reading areas and meeting rooms in the library building for the public to study, consult, select and examine library materials or to participate in related library programs. Any activity not connected with these purposes is inappropriate. Anyone who disregards these purposes is subject to removal from the building and/or restriction of library privileges.

1. VIOLATIONS:

The Public Library serves the community most effectively when all users conform to the following policy; those who fail to comply will be allowed a Hearing to answer the charges against them before the Library Director, or the Board of Library Trustees, and upon decision of same may be required to submit to sanctions or leave the premises (See below):

a. The following activities are not allowed in the library:

- Smoking (Massachusetts General Laws [MGL] Ch. 270, Sec. 21-22) and use or consumption of tobacco products, including use of electronic devices and/or vaping
- Cannabis usage in any form
- Possession or use of any unlawful controlled substance
- Creating a disturbance by making noise, talking loudly or engaging in other disruptive conduct [MGL, Ch. 272, Sec. 41)
- Interfering with another person's right to use the library or with the library staff's performance of their duties (including enactment or enforcement of approved policies), or a library volunteer's performance of volunteer duties
- Threatening behavior, including, but not limited to, hate speech, violence, threats of violence and possession of weapons
- Bringing animals into the library except those needed to assist as a therapy animal, or service or emotional support animal
- Playing audio equipment so that others can hear it
- Misusing the rest rooms (e.g. using them as a laundry or washing facility)
- Soliciting, canvassing, proselytizing and panhandling of any kind
- Entering areas posted "Staff Only" without permission
- Per MGL Ch.119, Sec. 39, leaving a child under the age of 10 unattended in the library
- Running
- Sleeping
- Engaging in any act or conduct which is prohibited by the Massachusetts General Laws or the Charter and bylaws of the Town of Westford

b. Any person who damages or defaces library materials or property will be prosecuted (MGL, Ch. 266, Sec. 100). Parents are liable for damage done by a child under 18 (MGL, Ch. 231, Sec. 85).



- c. Theft of library materials, use of false identification to obtain a library card, or use of another person’s library card without his/her permission are against state law and will be prosecuted (MGL, Ch. 266, Sec. 99).
- d. Parents are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their minor children.
- e. Legal concealed weapons must be carried responsibly, stored in a lockbox, and not accessible to others.

2. ENFORCEMENT:

Library staff and, at the request of a staff member, Westford Police Officers, are authorized to enforce these rules and regulations and may direct any person, who has engaged in or is engaging in prohibited conduct or activity, to leave the library and its grounds. Any person refusing to leave, after having been directed to do so by a staff member or police officer, shall be subject to arrest or prosecution for trespass.

3. SANCTIONS:

The Board of Trustees or the Director may impose sanctions against any person who has engaged in prohibited conduct or activity within the library, its vehicle or upon its grounds. Sanctions may include restrictions or suspensions of the individual’s library privileges and/or prohibiting the individual from entering or being present on, the library, its vehicle or grounds. Notice of such sanction or proposed sanction shall be given in writing and delivered either in person or by certified mail. In the case of a minor child, a copy of such notice shall be delivered, either in person or by certified mail, to the child’s parent or guardian, if the identity of such person is known to the Director. Such notice shall inform the person of the specific conduct or activity which is the basis for the sanction, the date of its occurrence and the right of the individual to a hearing on the sanction. Any person who enters the library or its vehicle or grounds, after receiving notice of a sanction prohibiting such entry shall be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespass.

4. APPEALS; RIGHT TO A HEARING:

Any person who is aggrieved by the action of the Board of Trustees or Director in imposing a sanction prior to a hearing, may appeal such decision to the Board of Trustees. The appeal shall be in writing and presented to the Board of Trustees within ten (10) days of the date upon which notice of the sanction was served upon the person. In addition, the Board of Trustees or the Director has the right to provide written notice of a hearing prior to imposing any sanctions under this policy.

All hearings under this policy will be conducted pursuant to Mass. General Laws, Ch.39, S. 23B, the Open Meeting Law. A person will be entitled to a minimum of five (5) days advance written notice of the scheduling of such hearing and will also be entitled to participate in such hearing either individually or through legal counsel, to cross-examine witnesses and to present evidence on his/her own behalf. The decision of the Board of Trustees shall be final and binding upon the individual.

VOTED AND APPROVED: 10/21/96; 1/7/2013; 11/19/2015; 5/14/2018; 9/9/2019; 6/6/2022;
2.6.23.