

Rules of Conduct

The Boston Free Library serves as a center for information, education and entertainment. Under applicable provisions of the New York State Education Law, including Article 5, Section 262 of such law, the Board of Trustees of the Boston Free Library Association has adopted these Rules of Conduct to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all library patrons.

Library patrons are expected to:

1. Respect other patrons and library staff.
2. Respect library property and property of others.
3. Obey the law and all library policies
4. Comply with all lawful directives and requests from library staff.

Failure to comply with these Rules of Conduct or any other established library policy, rule or regulation, or violations of local, state or federal law, may result in immediate suspension of library privileges, including removal from library property, and/or, where necessary, civil liability and/or criminal prosecution. Persons who enter or refuse to leave library property after being removed may be charged with trespassing.

The following are examples of prohibited conduct at the Boston Free Library:

1. Engaging in disorderly conduct, fighting or challenging another person to fight, or provoking others to violence;
2. Deliberately disturbing or annoying other patrons, staff or volunteers, including by engaging in noisy or boisterous activities, playing any audio device without earbuds;
3. Interfering with staff or volunteers in the performance of their duties or interfering with another patron's use of library materials or facilities, including persistent, unwelcome attention; obscene or threatening gestures, or following another person on or around the premises;
4. Carrying weapons of any kind;
5. Vaping, smoking, or otherwise using tobacco or marijuana products inside of the library or within 100 feet of any entrances, exits or outdoor areas of the Library property (in accordance with New York State Public Health Law Section 1399-O);
6. Possessing, distributing or consuming alcohol or illegal drugs or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
7. Engaging in sexual conduct, lewd behavior (e.g., exposure, offensive or inappropriate touching) or sexual harassment of another patron, staff member or volunteer;
8. Harassment or discrimination in violation of the B&ECPL Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Harassment Policy;
9. Damaging, destroying, or stealing any Library property or the property of another patron, staff or volunteer;
10. Bringing animals or pets into the library except those required to assist persons with disabilities or those involved in library programs;

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11. Selling and/or soliciting; petitioning;
12. Distributing or posting materials/literature that have not been approved by the Library;
13. Eating or drinking in designated restricted areas;
14. Making unreasonable use of the restrooms including bathing;
15. Sleeping or lying down;
16. Absence of shirts and/or shoes
17. Impairing the ability of patrons or staff to enter or exit the library; and
18. Skateboarding, rollerblading, roller-skating, bike riding, or other potentially dangerous or destructive activities.

No children under six years of age may be left unattended in any library at any time. Library staff will not be responsible for children who have been left without adult supervision. Adult patrons who are not engaged in library activities that require materials from the children's area may be asked to relocate to other areas of the library. The staff reserves the right to seek the intervention of appropriate law enforcement or social services agencies, as required by individual circumstances.

Persons whose actions violate these rules will be advised of their infraction(s). Failure to comply with the Library's established policies, rules and regulations or violations of local, state or federal law may result in immediate suspension of library privileges and, where necessary, civil liability and/or criminal prosecution.

Statement from the B&ECPL:

Public libraries are a limited public forum. Constitutional protection of a Library patron's right to enter and use a public Library is afforded only to those express activities that are consistent with the mission and purpose of the Library. These activities include receiving information and accessing Library resources. Other activities, such as photography, filming, petition-gathering, assemblies and public speeches, may be regulated by the Library using time, place and manner restrictions that are reasonable and viewpoint neutral.

The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library and the Boston Free Library adhere to the American Library Association's (ALA) Library Bill of Rights, ALA Code of Ethics and New York State law protecting privacy and confidentiality of Library users' records and information. The reason behind these laws and policies is to protect patrons' right to privacy when using the public Library and allow patrons use of the Library free from potential harassment and/or intimidation.

See Filming and Photography Guidelines Policy for additional information.

Amended 9/10/2019, Amended 2/8/2022, Amended 11/14/2023, Amended 2/11/2025