

Rules of Conduct

The Boston Free Library serves as a center for information, education and entertainment. Under Article 5, Section 262 of New York State Education Law, the Board of Trustees of the Boston Free Library Association has adopted the following rules to ensure an atmosphere conducive to appropriate use of the services and facilities of the library. Library users are required to comply with these Rules and Regulations.

The following conduct is prohibited:

1. Engaging in disorderly conduct, fighting or challenging to fight, or using offensive words likely to provoke violence or using language that offends others;
2. Disturbing other patrons, staff or volunteers including but not limited to disruptive behavior such as any loud, unreasonable and/or bothersome noises created by persons or devices; interfering with staff or volunteers in the performance of their duties and persistent, unwelcome attention; obscene or threatening gestures such as staring at another person; or following another person on or around the premises;
3. Carrying weapons of any kind;
4. Possessing, distributing or consuming alcohol or illegal drugs or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
5. Engaging in sexual conduct and/or lewd behavior (e.g., exposure, offensive or inappropriate touching, or sexual harassment of other patrons, staff or volunteers);
6. Engaging in discriminatory conduct in violation of the B&ECPL Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Harassment Policy;
7. Damaging, destroying, or stealing any Library property or the property of another patron, staff or volunteer;
8. Bringing animals or pets into the library except those required to assist persons with disabilities or those involved in library programs;
9. Selling and/or soliciting; petitioning;
10. Distributing or posting materials/literature that have not been approved by the Library;
11. Vaping, smoking cigarettes, cigars, pipes, smokeless electronic cigarettes or using tobacco products inside of the Library and no closer than one hundred (100) feet of any entrances, exits or outdoor areas of the Library property.
12. Eating or drinking in designated restricted areas;
13. Making unreasonable use of the restrooms including bathing;
14. Sleeping or lying down;
15. Absence of shirts and/or shoes.

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.

Photography or Recording on Library Premises:

While the library is a public space, the Boston Free Library is an Association Library, and as such is considered a private, non-governmental entity. Employees of an Association Library are not considered public employees. This information governs the Boston Free Library's policy on Photography and Recording on Library Premises.

Photography and Recording by the Library: The Boston Free Library staff must have the consent of each individual photographed. Photo Release Forms will be kept on file at the library. Group shots without identifying characteristics are exempt from consent forms.

Photography and Recording by the Public: Photography and video or audio recording by visitors to the library are generally permitted if it is strictly for personal use, but should not include members of the public or staff members without their permission.

Newsgathering: Members of the media who wish to conduct newsgathering in the library in any manner disruptive to, or interfering with, the operation of the library or its use by other customers or be inconsistent with its mission, must make themselves known to either the Director or to the staff member in charge of the building in the Director's absence. If disruption occurs, permission must be granted by the Director before further conducting newsgathering in the library.

In order to protect the rights of individuals and staff and to prevent disruptions, or interference with staff or customers, or conduct inconsistent with the library's mission, photographing and video or audio recording on library property are restricted as follows:

1. Under no circumstances may the public or members of the media take photographs or record video or audio without the express permission of any library customer or staff member who would be included within the composition. In the case of minors, permission must come from the parent or legal guardian.
2. Media are subject to the Rules of Conduct and may not disturb the normal operations of the library.

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 individual libraries within the B&ECPL System may have their own policies relating to photography or filming in their library. 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.

Amended 9/10/2019, Amended 2/8/2022