

BERTHA BARTLETT PUBLIC LIBRARIES PATRON POLICY

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to affirm the right of all people to free and equitable access to Library resources, services, facilities, and information without discrimination, intimidation, threats, harassment, or invasion of privacy.

1.2 Bertha Bartlett Public Libraries strive to provide a safe, clean, welcoming, and comfortable environment that supports reading, learning, research, creativity, and community engagement.

1.3 The Library is intended for use by all members of the public. Patrons are expected to respect the rights of other patrons, volunteers, and Library staff.

2. Policy Statement

2.1 The Library supports an environment where all patrons may use Library services without disruption or unreasonable interference.

2.2 Patrons are expected to:

- 2.2.1 Follow Library policies and procedures
- 2.2.2 Respect other patrons and Library staff
- 2.2.3 Use Library resources and facilities appropriately
- 2.2.4 Follow reasonable requests from Library staff

2.3 Misconduct, disruptive behavior, or activities that interfere with Library operations will not be permitted.

3. Patron Conduct and Decorum

3.1 Patrons shall behave in a respectful manner toward Library staff, volunteers, visitors, and other patrons.

3.2 Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- 3.2.1 Threatening, abusive, harassing, or offensive language
- 3.2.2 Fighting, physical intimidation, or threatening physical harm
- 3.2.3 Throwing objects, damaging property, or unsafe behavior
- 3.2.4 Bullying, harassment, or discrimination
- 3.2.5 Refusing to follow reasonable staff directions
- 3.2.6 Entering staff-only areas without authorization
- 3.2.7 Remaining in the Library after closing or during emergencies
- 3.2.8 Unauthorized photography, recording, or videotaping of individuals
- 3.2.9 Behavior or personal hygiene conditions that create a nuisance or health

concern for others

3.2.10 Bringing animals into Library buildings except service animals or approved program animals

3.2.11 Introducing pests, including bed bugs, through personal belongings or returned materials

3.2.12 Use of tobacco, vaping products, or prohibited substances on Library property

3.3 Patrons observing misconduct should notify Library staff and avoid personal confrontation.

4. Assistance and Staff Support

4.1 Library staff will make reasonable efforts to assist patrons with questions, technology, resources, and services.

4.2 Because Library staff must serve all patrons, assistance may be limited based on staff availability.

4.3 At staff discretion, individual assistance may generally be limited to fifteen (15) minutes per patron per day when other service needs require attention.

5. Food and Drink

5.1 Covered beverages and light, easily managed snacks are generally permitted in the Library.

5.2 Food and beverages are not permitted near electronic equipment unless authorized.

5.3 Patrons are asked to avoid:

5.3.1 Messy foods

5.3.2 Strongly scented foods

5.3.3 Foods that create excessive noise or disruption

5.4 Food may be restricted to designated areas at the discretion of Library staff.

5.5 Patrons are responsible for damage caused to Library materials, furniture, or equipment.

6. Registered Sex Offenders

6.1 Individuals convicted of sex offenses against minors may access Library services according to applicable Iowa law.

6.2 Eligible individuals may obtain Library services through available registration procedures, including in-person, telephone, online, or authorized designee arrangements when permitted.

6.3 Individuals remain responsible for all activity conducted under their Library account.

6.4 Individuals convicted of sex offenses against minors may not loiter, as defined by Iowa law, within three hundred (300) feet of Library property.

7. Children and Unattended Minors

7.1 Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for supervising children using the Library.

7.2 Preschool children and infants must have a responsible adult caregiver present at all times.

7.3 Older children may use the Library independently; however, disruptive behavior will be addressed according to this policy.

7.4 The Library is not responsible for unattended children before opening, after closing, or when left without appropriate supervision.

8. Enforcement and Consequences

8.1 Library staff are responsible for identifying misconduct and enforcing Library policies.

8.2 Depending on the severity and frequency of behavior, enforcement may include:

- 8.2.1 Verbal warning and request to correct behavior
- 8.2.2 Request to leave Library property
- 8.2.3 Temporary suspension of Library privileges
- 8.2.4 Written notice of restrictions
- 8.2.5 Permanent loss of Library privileges when appropriate

8.3 Serious misconduct may result in immediate removal from the building and grounds.

8.4 Library staff may contact law enforcement when necessary to protect safety, property, or operations.

8.5 Repeated or severe violations may result in additional restrictions or suspension as determined by the Library Director.

9. Security and Safety

9.1 Security cameras may be located in public and staff areas of the Library.

9.2 Cameras are used to support safety, security, incident review, protection of Library property, and operational needs.

10. Appeals

10.1 A patron who believes Library privileges have been unfairly suspended may submit a written appeal to the Library Board of Trustees.

10.2 Appeals must be submitted to the Library Front Desk at least seven (7) days before a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

10.3 The Library Board will review the appeal and provide a written response.

11. Policy Review

11.1 This policy will be reviewed periodically by Library staff and the Library Board.

12. Adoption & Revision History

12.1 Approved: March 27, 1989

12.2 Revised: September 1998

12.3 Reviewed: May 2001; January 2003

12.4 Revised: January 2008; May 2010

12.5 Reviewed: May 2014; July 2018

12.6 Revised: July 2021

12.7 Revised: February 2025

12.8 Format revised June 2026