



What will you discover?

Policy Manual

Table of Contents

3	Patron Behavior
5	Child Safety
6	Community Bulletin Boards
8	Use of Library Spaces
10	Use of Library Property for Soliciting, Fundraising, and Other Such Uses
11	Public Meeting Rooms
16	Exam Proctoring
17	Collection Development
20	Public Use of the Internet and Library Computers
21	Hotspot Lending
22	Exhibits
23	Donations of Books and Other Materials
24	Privacy
26	Use of Library Staff Equipment
27	Volunteers
29	Library Programs
32	Request to Reconsider Library Policy

PATRON BEHAVIOR POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to define the guidelines for acceptable behavior while on library property. These guidelines serve to protect our library's resources and maximize the safety and comfort of library visitors and staff.

In addition to these policies, all patrons and staff are expected to adhere to state and federal laws, public health guidelines, Town policies, and other library policies while on library property.

The following activities are allowed in the library:

- Filming library staff and patrons, except in bathrooms, designated "staff only" areas, and during library programs or sponsored events except with permission from the Library Director.
- Consuming snacks and covered beverages, except near computers, equipment, Local History collection, and inside the Teen Room. Waste or spills must be cleaned promptly.
- Bringing service animals, or service animals in training, into the library.

The following activities are prohibited on library property:

- Smoking, vaping, and consumption of marijuana or alcoholic beverages-
- Possession of weapons, unless authorized by law.
- Playing of audio equipment so that others can hear.
- Using the restrooms in ways that create safety hazards or prevent use of facilities by others, such as bathing, doing laundry, grooming, or flushing any materials other than waste and toilet paper.
- Leaving a child under the age of 10 unattended in the Library.
- Engaging in disruptive conduct including, but not limited to: talking loudly, making noise, running, pushing, shoving, throwing objects, moving furniture from one area to another, blocking walkways, or creating tripping hazards.
- Interfering with another person's use of the Library or with Library personnel's performance of their duties.
- Entering the library with any odor that poses a possible health risk (hazardous chemical, fecal matter, rotting food, smoke, communicable infection) or any substance that can damage the library or pose a risk to those in it. Patrons must address any such odor or substance, and if a risk is determined to be present, mitigate it immediately.
- Entering or using the library without proper clothing, including shoes.
- Posting flyers without permission.
- Bringing animals other than service animals, service animals in training, or animals supporting a library program into the library.
- Stalking, staring, touching, or using abusive language to library staff or other patrons.

Library staff will intervene to stop prohibited activities and behaviors. Patrons will receive one reminder of the policy. Failure to comply a second time may result in removal from the building. Serious or repeated failures to comply with this policy may

be denied access to the Library and issued a No Trespass Order. Any patron whose privileges have been denied may have the decision reviewed by the Board of Library Trustees. Requests for such review must be made in writing within 90 days of the denial. The denial shall be upheld while the request is under consideration. A written response will be sent via Certified Mail by the Board Chair once a determination is made.

Last Updated: January 2025

Approved by the Trustees on: February 11, 2025

Child Safety Policy

The purpose of this policy is to clarify age requirements for unattended library use, and to define the responsibilities of the designated caregiver to monitor and keep children safe.

The Northborough Free Library welcomes children of all ages to use and enjoy the facilities, collections, and programs offered by the library. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the caregiver and not with library staff. Children ages nine and under must have a designated caregiver that is at least 14 years old in the immediate vicinity and in visual contact with the child using the library.

Children between the ages of five and nine may attend certain library programs without a caregiver in the room, under the following conditions:

- Caregivers are responsible for escorting children to the program room, remaining in the library building for the duration of the program, and meeting children in the program room at the conclusion of the program.
- Programs must specifically note in the program description that the program is a “drop-off” program. Programs that are not designated as “drop-off” will require the caregiver to remain in the program room for the entirety of the program.
- Caregivers are welcome to remain in the room for the duration of the program, and are never prohibited from entering the room during the program.
- Library staff may, at their discretion, ask a caregiver to return to the room or remain with a child for the duration of a “drop-off” program.

Occasionally, the library may host a program for children in grades 3-5 designated a “special drop-off program.” For these programs, caregivers have the option to drop off children at the program and leave the library for the duration of the program.

Caregivers must be present at the program room at drop-off and pick up, must provide a phone number in case of emergencies, and must follow any special instructions provided by library staff. Children in special drop-off programs must be able to follow program rules and behavioral expectations, or their caregiver will be called to pick them up.

Children age ten and up may use the library on their own provided that they comply with the Patron Behavior Policy.

Children Left Unattended After Library Hours

Children must be picked up before the library closes. The library is not responsible for children without a ride home at closing. Staff may, at their discretion, contact the Northborough Police Department to wait with a child with no ride home after the library closes.

Last Updated: December 2025

Approved by the Library Trustees on: January 13, 2026

Community Bulletin Boards

The purpose of this policy is to define what the library's community bulletin boards may and may not be used to advertise. It applies to both the library's virtual community events page as well as our in-house bulletin boards.

Posting Guidelines

All items must be reviewed and posted by library staff. Notices posted without authorization will be removed. The Library Director or designee has final say on postings.

All activities and events noted in the materials for distribution and display must be open to all.

Due to limited space, the library reserves the right to prioritize items that are posted based on community interest and timeliness. The library reserves the right to remove postings early or delay approval of an item based on space limitations.

Postings will be date stamped and removed after the event has passed, or after four weeks. The library cannot hold or return materials to any group or individual after the posting expires.

Posting of materials does not imply library endorsement nor consent; nor will the library accept responsibility for the accuracy of the statements made in such materials.

Postings may not be any larger than 8 ½" x 11".

Postings with tear off tabs are strongly discouraged. Such fliers may be removed by library staff before the removal date if they become a nuisance.

The library will not edit postings, whether printed or online, for content, spelling, or formatting.

Community bulletin boards *MAY* be used for the following:

Postings of forthcoming or continuing educational, social, civic, charitable, cultural or recreational events and activities in Northborough. Events occurring in towns immediately surrounding, and of interest to, Northborough may be approved, provided that there is sufficient space available on the board.

Flyers, brochures, or schedules of local nonprofit organizations, groups or agencies.

Postings by any federal, state, or local government agencies providing services to citizens.

Postings announcing community services and volunteer opportunities.

Postings containing unbiased, neutral information about a Northborough warrant article or ballot measure, or that include information about all of the candidates running for a Northborough board or committee. Postings advertising candidate forums or information sessions are also permitted.

Community bulletin boards *MAY NOT* be used for the following:

Postings that discriminate, or promote hate, against any individual(s) or group(s) of individuals by race, religion, creed, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical or mental challenges or conditions, military or veteran service, citizenship, housing status, or any other factor.

Postings that encourage, promote, incite, or in any way condone any illegal activity or any kind of violence, harassment, physical harm, etc. against any individuals or groups of individuals.

Commercial materials (solicitations, business cards, job postings, retail advertising, etc.) from individuals or for-profit groups, companies, or organizations (including - but not limited to - for-profit nursery schools, job announcements, and personal notices of items for sale).

Postings - personal or otherwise - for the solicitation of members, requesting donations, raising funds, or selling merchandise, with some exceptions at the discretion of the library.

Materials that support or oppose any political candidate or ballot measure. Materials on individual candidates can not be distributed or displayed in the library.

Postings that seek to persuade politically or religiously.

Materials that support or oppose a specific religious conviction.

Postings that reduce or interfere with others' equitable access to Library materials, services, and spaces.

Postings that contain obscene content, as defined by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Last update: August 2023

Approved by the Library Trustees on September 12, 2023

Use of Library Spaces

The purpose of this policy is to clarify special usage of spaces throughout the library. This policy excludes the use of the Meeting Room, Conference Room, and Children's Program Room.

Small Group Study Rooms: The Library offers 2 quiet study rooms upstairs for use during regular library hours.

Study Room A: This room seats a maximum of 4 people and is available by reservation. The room may be reserved for up to two hours at a time. Reservations may be extended in 60 minute increments, at the discretion of the Adult Services staff, if the room is not reserved by another patron.

Study Room B: There are two desks with two chairs each in this room that seats a maximum of 4 people and is available by reservation. The room may be reserved for up to two hours at a time. Reservations may be extended in 60 minute increments, at the discretion of the Adult Services staff, if the room is not reserved by another patron.

Reservations for the Quiet Study and Reference rooms are maintained by the Adult Services Department. Reservations for either room will be held for ten minutes past the requested time, at which point they will be canceled. Patrons are required to check in at the Adult Services desk upon arrival. Groups can only have three reservations on the calendar at one time, and may only reserve the room up to one month in advance.

Silent Study Area: This area is located on the second floor of the library and is open for use without reservations. This area is intended to be a silent, focused environment for deep and uninterrupted study. Patrons in this space should refrain from making noise that may distract others in the space. This includes, but is not limited to, talking, using a cell phone, rustling papers, or participating in activities at a noise level that disturbs other patrons and must use headphones when using sound on a device.

Teen and Adult Program Room: This room is located on the second floor of the library. When the room is not in use for a scheduled program, it may be used as an open study space on a first-come, first-served basis. Outside groups may not request use of this room.

Teen Room: Anyone is welcome to browse the collection, borrow materials, or accompany a teen in the room. However, work and study spaces as well as equipment

within the Teen Room are reserved for youth going into grades 6 through high school only.

Children's Room: Anyone is welcome to browse the collection, borrow materials, or accompany a child in the room. However, work and study spaces, equipment, toys, and seating within the Children's Room are reserved for children and their caregivers only.

Kitchenette: The kitchenette is only available for use by groups using the Conference Room or Meeting Room during their meeting. The appliances within the room are not available for use by the general public.

Last update: May 2025

Approved by the Library Trustees on June 10, 2025

Use of Library Property for Soliciting, Fundraising, or Other Such Uses

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of the library property by individuals and outside groups for fundraising, donation drives, literature distribution, gathering signatures, conducting surveys, and placing yard signs.

The Library is committed to providing free and equal access to its resources, which include use of the library grounds and facility. With the exception of the Friends of the Northborough Library, Inc, the Library does not permit the use of the Library property for fundraising purposes.

The Library does permit, with prior permission of the Library Director, the use of the Library property for in-kind donation drives. Requests must be made in writing to the Library Director, and must include the following information: name of charity or cause, specific materials sought (groups may NOT request or accept monetary donations as a part of drive held at the library), start and end date of donation drive, space requirements, and contact information (name, phone number, and email address) of the person in charge of processing donations. The library may deny requests for reasons including, but not limited to: space availability, potential disruption to library operations, misalignment with library procedures, or activities that are commercial or political in nature.

Distributing literature, gathering signatures, or conducting surveys inside a Library facility or on Library grounds, is permitted under the following guidelines:

- Entrances and emergency exits must be left clear and allow for easy access by other library patrons.
- Interactions with other patrons must be in accordance with our Patron Behavior Policy.
- Such activity is limited to common areas only, including the library grounds and sidewalks, Meeting and Conference Rooms, and the library lobby. Conducting these activities in reading areas, stacks, study rooms, or quiet seating areas is considered a disruption to patrons using the library.

Placing yard signs on library property by any group other than the Town of Northborough or the Friends of the Northborough Library is prohibited.

Any group wishing to use the library grounds for any other purpose must submit a request writing to the Library Board of Trustees and Library Director. Issues that will need to be addressed include liability, insurance coverage, and any other concerns of the Board of Trustees. The proposed use is subject to final review and approval by the Northborough Police and Fire Departments.

Last update: February 2024

Approved by the Library Trustees on: April 9, 2024

PUBLIC MEETING ROOM POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to outline how, when, and by whom the public meeting rooms in the library may be used.

Use of the rooms does not constitute or imply endorsement of the users' policies, beliefs, or programs by the library staff or Board of Trustees.

Rooms are available for use by Northborough-affiliated non-profit groups and civic organizations under conditions set by the Board of Library Trustees.

Rooms are available for educational, civic and cultural activities that are free and open to the public such as group discussions, exhibits, lectures, and civic meetings. They are unavailable for uses not deemed to be in the public interest of the community as determined by the Board of Trustees, such as;

- Commercial use, defined as events including solicitations, admission or other charges, fundraising activities (except for the Friends of the Northborough Library), sales, and/or the provision of fee-based services.
- Social use, defined as events such as reunions, showers, birthday parties, dances, weddings, and other events of such nature.
- Individual use: Rooms may not be booked for individual use, with the exception of the Conference Room, under the conditions outlined below. The library does have several Study Rooms available for this purpose.
- Political purposes: rooms may not be used to host political rallies, campaigns for political officials, or campaigns for specific partisan issues. Organizational meetings, forums, and office hours hosted by current elected officials serving the town of Northborough are acceptable so long as they are free and open to the public.
- Healthcare Services: Meeting rooms may not be used to provide any kind of direct healthcare services including examinations, hands-on demonstrations, or treatments unless sponsored by a town department.

Meeting attendees or children's groups are subject to all other Library policies. Use of rooms may not disrupt regular library business. Noise levels must not disturb other patrons or library staff.

RESERVATIONS AND USE

Note: In addition to these general rules that apply to all rooms, there are additional reservation and use rules for each individual room. Please read the section that pertains to the room you are booking carefully.

- Reservations must be made using the library's online booking software, or by contacting the Circulation Department.
- Rooms are available for use by community groups directly serving Northborough

residents.

- Reservation must be made by a Northborough resident or Northborough town employee who will serve as the primary contact for the booking. The contact person must be at least 18 years of age, must attend the meeting, and must include their name, address, and phone number with the reservation.
- Groups must start programs during regular library hours.
- Reservations are limited to the time frame available within the parameters of the booking software.
- The use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, open flames, incense, and lit candles is not allowed.
- No tape, tacks, or other fasteners may be used on any walls, doors, windows or woodwork in the rooms.
- Groups are responsible for providing pens, markers, paper, or any other supplies.
- Groups may only use the tables and chairs designated for the room. Furniture located elsewhere in the library may not be moved into the room for use.
- Groups are also responsible for leaving the room in a neat and orderly condition, with furniture returned to its original location.
- Tables used for crafts, food, or beverage must be wiped down after use.

RESERVATIONS FOR TOWN DEPARTMENTS

The Library Director may waive certain requirements of this policy for official town business. To ensure smooth operations for both the Library and Town Departments as well as municipal Boards & Committees, Town departments needing to reserve rooms that require a waiver of the following public rules shall coordinate directly with the Library Director or their designee to do so:

- Maximum number of reservations at one time or in one calendar year
- Reserving a date outside the parameters of the booking software
- Meetings and trainings held by town departments do not necessarily need to be open to the public, such as staff meetings or executive sessions.
- Requests for use outside of normal library hours may be approved. Department Staff requesting use of the room are responsible for properly securing the library during and after the meeting. A door key may be temporarily issued to allow staff entry to the building.

Town departments must still adhere to general facility rules. Library programs and business will take precedence over town requests. Public bookings that have prior approval will not be canceled to accommodate a Town Department, Board, or Committee.

PUBLICITY

Any posters, flyers or other publicity shall be the responsibility of the group using the rooms. The group must clearly identify itself as the sponsoring organization in any such publicity. Publicity must not imply endorsement of the event by the library, the Friends of the Library, or the Town of Northborough. No events will be publicized by the library through its information channels unless the event is sponsored by the

library or the Friends of the Library.

CANCELLATIONS

- Cancellations should be made as soon as possible.
- The group is responsible for notifying attendees of the cancellation.
- The library reserves the right to cancel a reservation, but every effort will be made to give adequate advance notice.
- Missing two consecutive reservations without notifying library staff will result in loss of booking privileges for the group for a period of three months. Future no-shows for the same group will result in loss of booking privileges for up to one year.

CHARGES

- There is no charge for the use of the rooms.
- Any fees for damages or cleaning will be charged to the primary contact listed on the booking form.
- No admissions fees may be charged, or collections, sales or solicitations made, with exception for Friends of the Northborough Library fundraising events.

MEETING ROOM

A group may have up to three reservations for the Meeting Room on the calendar at one time, and may book the Meeting Room no more than 12 times in one calendar year.

The maximum occupancy for the Meeting Room is as follows:

Tables and Chairs: 74

Chairs only: 160

Standing only: 224

The library has limited parking which must remain available for other library activities. Groups using the Meeting Room should use the town parking lot at the corner of Pierce and Hudson Streets.

Meetings in the Meeting Room may end after the library closes. Groups wishing to use the Meeting Room after hours must submit an After Hours Use Form to the Circulation Desk at least 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting. Meetings must end by 10pm. Requests to allow a meeting to run longer than 10pm must be submitted at least a week prior to the meeting date and will be considered and approved by the Library Director on a case-by-case basis.

Groups may set up the room (i.e. arranging chairs, tables, etc.) in the way which it prefers. Furniture may not block doors or fire safety equipment. Groups may not cover or move any artwork on display.

A kitchenette is available for serving light refreshments, but not for preparing and serving meals. Groups must provide their own refreshments, tablecloths, and paper goods. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

The library has microphones, a projector, DVD player, and Listen Assist devices available in the room for public use. Please contact the Adult Services Desk at least a week prior to your meeting date if you would like to arrange a training on the equipment. AV setup and takedown is the responsibility of the Group. AV support during meetings is not a guarantee, as staff may not be available to assist.

CONFERENCE ROOM

A group may have up to three reservations for the Conference Room on the calendar at one time. There is no yearly limit for usage of the Conference Room.

Same-day individual use of the Conference Room is permitted on a walk-in basis, when there are no Study Rooms available.

The Conference Room comfortably seats 10 around the large meeting table. There are a total of 18 chairs in the room. The table in the Conference Room cannot be moved.

Meetings in the Conference Room may end after the library closes. Groups wishing to use the Conference Room after hours must submit an After Hours Use Form to the Circulation Desk at least 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting. Meetings must end by 10pm. Requests to allow a meeting to run longer than 10pm must be submitted at least a week prior to the meeting date and will be considered and approved by the Library Director on a case-by-case basis.

A kitchenette is available for serving light refreshments, but not for preparing and serving meals. Groups must provide their own refreshments, tablecloths, and paper goods. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

There is a white board on the wall. There is no AV equipment in this room. A projector is available for use, but there is no screen. Please contact the Reference Desk at least a week prior to your meeting date if you would like to arrange a training on use of the projector. Setup and takedown is the responsibility of the Group. Support during meetings is not a guarantee, as staff may not be available to assist.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM ROOM

A group may have up to three room reservations on the calendar at a time. There is no yearly limit for usage of the Children's Program Room.

The Children's Program Room is designated specifically for use by children's groups and for children's programs. It is furnished with child-sized furniture and designed to accommodate the needs of young children. For safety, comfort, and appropriateness, use of this room is limited to activities and groups that primarily serve young children.

The room is furnished with 5 child-sized tables and 20 child-sized chairs on half of the room, with linoleum on the floor. The other half of the room has a carpet and a dramatic play area, with a brick pillar in the middle of the room separating the two areas. There is a sink in the room.

Due to the unique layout and setup of this room, activities requiring lots of movement, including but not limited to running, jumping, and dancing, may result in injury and are therefore prohibited in the Children's Program Room.

Groups must start and end programs during regular library hours. After hours use of this room is not permitted.

Groups may set up the room (i.e. arranging chairs, tables, etc.) in the way which it prefers, but must keep the tables on the linoleum. Dramatic play items may not be removed from the room.

The Trustees reserve the right to deny the use of any meeting space to any group that does not comply with these policies.

Last update: January 2026

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on: January 13, 2026

Exam Proctoring

The purpose of the Exam Proctoring Policy is to establish guidelines for students who want to take a proctored exam at the Northborough Free Library.

The library staff is able to proctor exams under specific conditions:

1. Staff cannot monitor or directly supervise the student during the duration of the exam (online or print).
2. Proctoring cannot be done outside of library hours. All print proctored exams must be completed 15 minutes prior to closing to allow staff time to scan and email the finished exam.
3. Proctoring services must be scheduled with the library in advance and are based on scheduling availability.
4. Proctoring services may be administered by any library staff on duty.
5. Personal belongings cannot be left with staff.
6. Staff will not be responsible for setting up the room or equipment in advance.

Where can you take your exam?

You can take your exam anywhere where seating is available in the library, with the exception of the Teen Room and Children's Room. Individual study rooms are available upon request and may be reserved ahead of time.

Requesting a Proctored Exam:

- Contact the Reference Desk at noboadults@cwmares.org or by phone at **(508) 393-5025 ext. 3** to schedule your testing date. You can reserve an individual study room, wifi hotspot, laptop, and/or headphones at the same time.
- **Need your test printed?** Ask your instructor to email the exam and any instructions to us to noboadults@cwmares.org at least two days before the exam date with the subject:

Student's Name Proctored Exam on MM/DD/YYYY

After the Exam:

Staff will scan and email the completed exam to the appropriate person/entity. If the exam needs to be mailed in, the student is responsible for providing the proper materials and information to staff.

Last Update: August 2023

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on September 12, 2023

Collection Development

The purpose of this Collection Development Policy is to establish criteria for what, how, and why materials are selected for inclusion in the Northborough Free Library.

COMMUNITY

The Northborough Free Library is supported by, and recognizes as its primary clientele, people who live and work in the Town of Northborough. Additionally, the Library participates in cooperative lending agreements through a membership in the Central/Western Massachusetts Resource Sharing Consortium (C/W MARS) and participation in national interlibrary loan services. The Library also partners with the MA Board of Library Commissioners to provide additional shared resources.

COLLECTION RESPONSIBILITY

The final authority for the selection, evaluation, and deselection of library materials is delegated by the Board of Library Trustees to the Library Director and, under the Director's guidance, to members of the staff who are qualified by training and experience.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

The policies of the Northborough Free Library are informed by principles contained in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements, as well as the Intellectual Freedom Guide for Massachusetts Libraries published by the MA Board of Library Commissioners.

The library provides free and open access to its holdings for patrons of all ages and backgrounds. Access to materials is not restricted or monitored by staff. Responsibility for reading, listening, and viewing choices rests entirely with the individual library user or, in the case of minors, with their parent or legal guardian. While people may reject certain materials for themselves or their children, they may not restrict the freedom of others to read, hear, or see those materials.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The library's collection is intended to reflect and support our diverse community. A wide range of subjects, viewpoints, authors, and formats are collected in order to reflect the diversity of needs and interests within our community. Our selection process and criteria include, but are not limited to, the following considerations:

- Contemporary relevance or significance
- Permanent value
- Popular demand or anticipated interest

- Purpose and quality of the material
- Representation of diverse viewpoints, trends, creators, and/or cultural movements
- Creator's authority, reputation, skill, and significance
- Critically reviewed in professional or literary periodicals
- Suitability of format
- Whether the item addresses a gap in the current collection
- Budget
- Available space
- Availability elsewhere in the library's network
- Materials of local and regional interest
- Subscriptions to online resources are subject to cost, accessibility, and availability of library licenses
- Non-traditional objects to encourage learning and recreation

Children and Teen Materials: Materials are selected for children and teens with the intention to meet and support recreational and entertainment reading needs, encourage reading and pre-reading skills, supplement educational needs, and reflect the diverse backgrounds and abilities within the community. Recommended ages for reading materials is available through the publisher. Staff selecting materials for Children and Teen collections follow the same principles guiding development of the general collection. The responsibility of determining what a child should or should not read or view is that of the parent and/or guardian, and not determined by the Northborough Free Library or the staff.

Formats: The Northborough Free Library may choose to add or discontinue specific format types from its collection. Decisions about what formats to include are based on space availability, budget, obsolescence, and popularity.

Special Collections: The Northborough Free Library maintains a State and Local History collection that differs from the management and development of the general collection. Curation of this collection is driven by the following priorities: historical significance, condition of the material, public interest, space, and ability to properly archive materials. The collection mainly focuses on materials unavailable in digital format which are significant to the Town of Northborough, its history, and the immediate surrounding area.

Collection Limits: The selection of materials is limited to general or basic works that are not too specialized or considered beyond the scope of public library service. The library budget, space to house materials, and ability to circulate material are driving forces of the limits to our collections. The Library does not purchase or house textbooks or other curriculum-related materials due to their limited scope and cost. When selecting various forms of media, selectors consider and are limited by the accessibility and usability of the format, cost, popularity, and significance.

Donations: Donated materials (intended for the library's circulating collection) are

added based on the same selection criteria of purchased materials. Donations of other items (anything not intended for the library's circulating collection) fall under the criteria set forth in the Library Gifts Policy.

Local and/or Self-Published Authors: Local authors whose books have been published by a reputable publisher and have been well-reviewed will be evaluated in the same way as other books purchased for the library.

Local authors and self-published works are subject to the same selection criteria as other materials.

DESELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Library staff regularly review materials on the shelves to maintain an up-to-date, attractive, and useful collection that fits within our space constraints. Withdrawing materials that no longer meet our collection standards is equally important as our selection process. Our deselection process and criteria include, but are not limited to, the following considerations:

- Condition of the item
- Relevance, accuracy, and/or obsolescence of the information
- Use of or demand for the item
- Format of the item
- Number of copies of the item available on the shelf and within the library's network

Materials are NOT removed from the collection due to controversy surrounding the item, its author, or the content within. The library does not remove materials from the collection for the purpose of selling them. **Materials will not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.**

Whenever possible, efforts are made to keep items from being thrown away. Materials are donated to the Friends of the Northborough Library or another non-profit, recycled, or given to another library. Materials that are badly damaged, moldy, or are otherwise unable to be recycled will be properly disposed of.

MATERIALS EVALUATION

Northborough Residents wishing to suggest a title or new format for inclusion in the library's collections may do so by completing our Title Suggestion Form. Suggestions will be routed to the appropriate staff member for review. Residents wishing to be notified will receive a reply if the decision is made to add the suggested item to the collection, but this is not a requirement.

Last update: October 2023

Approved by the Library Trustees on: October 10, 2023

PUBLIC USE OF THE INTERNET AND LIBRARY COMPUTERS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure safe use of library computers and access to the internet at the Northborough Free Library.

Use of the Library's public computers is free to all patrons. Computers in the Teen Room are for teens in grades 6-12 only. The computer software will not allow cardholders over the age of 18 to log in to the Teen computers. A library card or guest pass is required to use the computers. Guest passes are available at the Adult Services Desk.

There is no daily time limit for public computer use, with the exception of Library Laptops. However, the library reserves the right to limit an individual's use of library hardware at its discretion. Use of public computers may be revoked at the discretion of Library staff. Behaviors warranting the loss of privileges include, but are not limited to:

- Viewing of sexually explicit materials
- Any online behaviors deemed illegal by state or federal law
- Destruction or damage of equipment or data
- Downloading or copying copyright-protected materials without authorization
- Violation of the Library's Patron Behavior Policy.
- Downloading/installing software
- Altering or attempting to alter software configurations or computer settings

Library staff can provide general guidance on basic searches, use of the internet, and installed software. Staff cannot perform extensive searches for patrons or resolve problems with personal accounts.

A computer that is idle for 5 minutes will restart automatically. Computers automatically shut down 15 minutes prior to the library's closing time.

The Library computers are equipped with a software that deletes all internet search histories, saved documents, and other temporary files automatically when the computer restarts. Please save your work to a personal device or account before logging off. Deleted information is not recoverable.

The Library does not control, endorse, filter, or monitor the information on the internet for content or accuracy. The Library must comply with all lawful search warrants and court orders regarding public computers.

Last update: January 2026

Approved by the Library Trustees on: January 13, 2026

Hotspot Lending Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define the guidelines for borrowing a hotspot from the library, and under what circumstances these privileges may be temporarily suspended.

A valid C/WMARS Library Network card in good standing is required to borrow a hotspot. Borrowers must be 18 years or older.

Hotspots must be reserved through the library's website or by contacting the Adult Services Desk. Devices will be held for pickup at the Adult Services Desk. If the hotspot isn't picked up by the close of business on the selected pickup date, the reservation will be canceled. The loan period for hotspots is three weeks with no renewals. If the hotspot is not returned on its due date, its data service will be turned off.

Hotspots must be returned in their cases with all their components to the main circulation desk on the 1st floor or to Adult Services on the 2nd floor. Do not return hotspots to another library, or in the library drop-off bins outside the library- devices can be damaged by dropping them in the outside bins and when they are exposed to excessive heat, cold, or moisture.

Failure to comply with these policies may result in the suspension of access privileges for 30 days. Repeated offenses, or misuse of equipment may result in the revocation of access privileges for 60 days.

As a library-provided Internet device, hotspots fall under the Library's Public Use of the Internet and Library Computers Policy. The Library is not responsible for any information a borrower accesses while using a wi-fi hotspot or any actions they take while online. Using the hotspot to access any online content determined to be illegal or obscene according to federal, state, or municipal law will result in revocation of hotspot borrowing privileges and possible criminal prosecution. Any attempt to alter the configuration of the hotspot is strictly prohibited and may result in permanent loss of borrowing privileges.

Last Update: December 2025

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on: January 13, 2026

Exhibits Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of the library's exhibit space(s) by individuals and organizations to display materials of an educational, cultural, or intellectual nature.

The views expressed by exhibitors and their exhibits are not endorsed by the Town of Northborough nor the Northborough Free Library. Exhibits are selected in accordance with the principles outlined in our Program Development Policy.

Exhibits are generally displayed for a period of four weeks, but may be longer or shorter at the discretion of the Library staff.

Items on exhibit in any of the public meeting rooms must hang on the wall using the existing hooks. Additional nails, hooks, or other means of hanging items are prohibited. Freestanding artworks or floor easels are also prohibited. Exhibits must not impede regular use of the meeting spaces.

The exhibitor is responsible for both setting up and removing the display. The exhibitor acknowledges that items will be shown in an unprotected public space, and may be irrevocably damaged by accident or other means. The Library is not responsible for loss or damage of any item on display.

The Library does not have the ability to store items before or after an exhibition. Staff will make reasonable attempts to contact the exhibitor if items are not picked up at the end of the exhibition. Items that remain unclaimed eight weeks after the conclusion of the exhibition will be considered abandoned property if the exhibitor is unresponsive.

It is understood that the Library retains the right to final authority for all curatorial decisions, including the appropriateness of the subject matter for this public space. Exhibits in the Meeting Room must be intended for an all ages audience.

Exhibitors agree to refrain from commercial advertisement. Prices of items for sale may be posted on a letter sized flier inside the room. Items sold during the display period may not be removed before the end of the exhibition. Library staff may not facilitate sales of any items.

An individual or organization is limited to one exhibit per calendar year. Exceptions may be approved at the discretion of the library staff.

Last Update: January 2026

Approved by Library Trustees on: January 13, 2026

Donations of Books and Other Materials

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the library's process for evaluating and accepting donations and gifts.

The library assumes no responsibility to accept gifts; any gift it accepts is with the understanding that the library will be the sole determinant of its use. New and used books donated to the library by individuals or groups will be accepted into the collection under the same criteria as provided elsewhere in this policy. Those items not suitable for the collection will be given to the Friends of the Library to sell, or when necessary, discarded.

The library will NOT accept books in poor condition, including those with mildew, water or smoke damage, insect infestation, defaced or ripped pages or covers, embedded dust and dirt, or other obvious damage. We will also not accept out of date textbooks.

Donors should ask prior approval before bringing in more than four boxes of books. The library will issue a receipt if requested, but the donor is responsible for estimating the value of the donated materials for tax purposes.

The library will accept funds to purchase books in honor of an occasion (birth of a child, significant birthday or anniversary) or in memory of a deceased family member. Those who wish to give such a gift should contact the Library Director, who may consult with one of the other librarians. The librarians will select (a) title(s) based on recommendations by the donor, keeping in mind the library's selection policy. Donors should understand that the book may not remain in the library's collection permanently. Donated books that wear out, are lost, or become out of date, will be removed from the library collection.

Other donated media such as music CDs, DVDs, audiobooks, computer games, and the like will be accepted under similar conditions. Those that cannot be used by the library will either be donated to the Friends of the Library for resale or discarded.

Any other physical gifts to the library must be approved by the Library Director. Furnishings, equipment, plants, art or other decorative items may not be needed.

Privacy Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define how your personally identifiable information is collected, shared, and protected at the Northborough Free Library.

Confidentiality applies to information sought or received and materials consulted or borrowed. It includes database search records, reference questions, library card records, checkout history, interlibrary loan transactions, program registration records, computer usage, library visits, and all other personally identifiable uses of library materials, facilities, or services.

Library staff may not use patron library accounts or information retrieval records for personal use and may not share this information with other individuals or groups for any purpose, except under the following circumstances:

- With other library personnel within the scope of their library duties.
- Representatives of any local, state, or federal government, with a subpoena or search warrant authorized under the authority of federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or investigative power.

If the Library is served with any such subpoena or search warrant, the Library Director will consult with the Town Administrator, Town Legal Counsel, and/or the Northborough Police Department to determine if the subpoena or search warrant is in proper form and if there is a valid basis for its issuance before providing confidential information.

Minor Patrons: Massachusetts General Laws Part I. Administration of the Government (Ch. 1-182) Ch. 78, § 7 prohibits disclosure by a public library of a patron's identity or patron's borrowing history. The law does not differentiate among categories of library patrons and applies equally to records of minor patrons and those of adults. Requests for information on the library account of any patron, regardless of age, will not be granted.

Retention of Confidential Information

Circulation Records: Library materials are circulated via the C/WMARS automation system. As a member of the C/WMARS network, the Northborough Free Library agrees to follow the network Privacy Policy with regards to the handling of records and information stored within the automation software. A copy of the network Privacy Policy will be provided upon request.

Searches of the online catalog: The Library does not require personal information to use the online catalog. Catalog searches are conducted via the C/WMARS automation software. Once a search is completed, a patron may clear their own search history. In-house computer search histories are automatically erased when the computer restarts. Neither the Library's computers nor the automation software retain copies of

any search.

Electronic Databases and the Internet: The Library licenses commercial electronic resources from a variety of vendors independently. The Library will make every effort to restrict electronic database vendors from collecting and using identifying personal information of library users, however it provides no guarantee that personal information will not be shared with third parties. Copies of any product's privacy policy will be provided upon request.

Additionally, some resources are made available from the C/WMARS network and the MA Board of Library Commissioners. The contracts for those are handled by the respective organizations. Copies of any product's privacy policy will be provided upon request.

While use of any licensed database is at the discretion of the library patron, in order to access content on licensed databases, library patrons may be required to provide their library card number and library PIN for the purposes of verifying authorized use of the product. Some databases may require additional information, which should be provided at the discretion of the user.

Library Newsletters: Subscription to Library newsletters is done on an opt-in basis. Library patrons may unsubscribe at any time. The Library will not share, sell, or rent any newsletter list to any entity for any reason. The Library will not use any newsletter software vendor unless the vendor's privacy policy expressly states that the vendor will not use, share, or sell your information. A copy of the vendor's privacy policy will be provided upon request.

Interlibrary Loan Records: Patrons may borrow items not owned by the Northborough Free Library from other libraries outside of the C/WMARS network. The Library uses automation software outside of the library network to process these requests. Borrower information contained within the software is subject to the privacy policies of those organizations. A copy of these privacy policies will be provided upon request.

Reference Questions: When a patron asks a library staff member for information, the staff member may occasionally make written notes in the course of the discussion. This information is destroyed as soon as the inquiry is completed. Staff may only discuss patron questions with other staff or staff from another institution for the purposes of answering a complex question. In any such case, staff will only divulge enough information as required to answer said question.

Last Update: January 2025

Approved by the Library Trustees on January 14, 2025

Use of Library Staff Equipment

The purpose of this policy is to define acceptable use of Library staff equipment by members of the public.

Library staff equipment is defined as equipment provided expressly for the purpose of staff to assist patrons and conduct Library business. This includes, but is not limited to, phones, computers, printers, fax machines, photocopiers, furniture, and office supplies not specifically designated for public use.

Library staff equipment is critical to the proper functioning of the Library. Use of library staff equipment by members of the public would hinder the Library's ability to conduct business, and is therefore prohibited.

Last Updated: January 2025

Approved by the Library Trustees on: February 11, 2025

Volunteer Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide overall guidance and direction to the staff and to volunteers. It is intended for internal management guidance only and does not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement.

Selection of Volunteers: The Northborough Free Library welcomes members of the community to volunteer their time and talents to expand and enhance library services. Volunteers supplement, but do not replace, the work done by library employees. Volunteers are expected to act in accordance with library policies and to reflect positive customer service attitudes to all library patrons and staff. Volunteers are selected for projects or tasks within a specific department of the library depending on need, availability, qualifications, and personal interest. Selection and scheduling of volunteers is the responsibility of the Library's Volunteer Coordinator, with the exception of Children's Room and Teen Room Volunteers, which are scheduled by respective library department heads.

Schedules: Volunteers must set up and adhere to a schedule agreed upon by relevant department staff. Changes to volunteer schedules must be cleared by department staff. Volunteers must sign in at the assigned department upon arrival, and record their hours when signing out. In order to maintain a smooth workflow, volunteers may not work unapproved shifts or perform duties not specifically assigned to them by department staff.

Training and Supervision: Volunteers must schedule training with the appropriate staff person who will supervise their work. All training must be done satisfactorily before the volunteer's service begins.

Volunteers Under the Age of 18

The library occasionally has special volunteer opportunities for residents under the age of 18. In all cases, applications must be filled out and submitted by the individual wishing to volunteer. The library will not accept applications on behalf of an individual.

Community Service

Persons who seek volunteer assignments at the Northborough Free Library to meet a requirement set by an outside agency for the performance of community service shall be subject to the above recruitment and selection process and all other provisions of this policy. Persons should contact their agency to determine if the library is on the agency's approved list of organizations to complete their community service hours.

Court appointed community service volunteers should consult with the Library Director concerning their community service requirements to see if an appropriate volunteer opportunity exists. Responsibility for ensuring service hours qualify for court-mandated

service rests with the individual completing the volunteer service.

Senior Work-Off Programs

Eligible seniors may reduce their real estate tax bills by working part-time for the Town of Northborough. Placement at the library is based on availability of suitable work. Coordination for this program is done through the Senior Center.

Friends of the Northborough Library, Inc.:

Any interested volunteer who would like to work with the Friends of the Northborough Library-should contact the Friends directly.

Regulations:

- The Library Director reserves the right to dismiss any volunteer without cause.
- Volunteers are prohibited from entering areas marked as “staff only” or “authorized personnel only” without prior authorization.
- Volunteers may not use staff computers at any time. Volunteers needing access to the library’s collection databases must use the OPAC to do so.
- Volunteers are prohibited from staffing or standing behind a service desk, answering the phone, or providing direct patron assistance outside of referring patrons to a service desk.

Last Update: January 2025

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on March 12, 2025

Library Program Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines for the planning and operation of Library sponsored programs and events, and to inform the public about standards and principles that are applied to the program selection and management process.

COMMUNITY

The Northborough Free Library is supported by, and recognizes as its primary clientele, people who live and work in the Town of Northborough.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITY

The final authority for the development and selection of library programs is delegated by the Board of Library Trustees to the Library Director and, under the Director's guidance, to members of the staff who are qualified by training and experience.

ACCESS TO PROGRAMS

The policies of the Northborough Free Library are informed by principles contained in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements, as well as the Intellectual Freedom Guide for Massachusetts Libraries published by the MA Board of Library Commissioners.

Responsibility for attending a library program rests entirely with the individual library user or, in the case of minors, with their parent or legal guardian. While people may reject certain programs for themselves or their children, they may not restrict the freedom of others to attend those programs.

The library reserves the right to deny attendance to anyone becoming disruptive to audience members or the program facilitator, and to anyone in violation of the Library's policies.

Programs will not be canceled or restricted due to partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Library programs are defined as activities or events in a group setting, in person or online, that are developed to meet the educational, social, recreational, cultural, or informational needs of an anticipated audience in the community.

Program types include, but are not limited to: lectures, forums, visual and performance art, interactive classes, workshops, continuing education, fairs,

discussion groups, technology programs, story times, class visits, tours, community outreach, exhibits, and presentations. Programs may be single events, short series, or continuous regular offerings.

Library staff make decisions regarding program topics, content, presenters, format, and related resources using the following considerations:

- Relevance to the library's mission, strategic plan, and goals
- Community needs and interests, including feedback and suggestions from residents
- Potential to promote, supplement, and encourage the use of library collections and resources
- Presentation quality as determined by presenter's background, record of presentations, and qualifications in the relevant content area
- Historical, cultural, or educational significance
- Space required, and the availability of that space
- Budget
- Staffing
- Balance of current programs being offered at the library
- Connection to other community programs, exhibitions, or events
- Safety and security of patrons and staff
- National and local observances, commemorative months, and community initiatives

Library programs may take place inside the library or on the library's grounds, at offsite locations, or online, and may be delivered by library staff or chosen library partners. Programs may be in-person, hybrid, or virtual, and may be recorded for later playback.

FUNDING AND FEES

Municipal appropriations are generally not used to cover program fees. The library receives funding for library programs from the Friends of the Northborough Library, Inc., as well as from grants and support from charitable organizations. The library may also partner with other institutions, organizations, or individuals who have received funding to offer Library programs.

Library programs are offered to the public free of charge. Fees for programs or merchandise may be applied to book sales, raffles, and other types of fundraising by the Friends of the Library. At the Library Director's discretion, fees for programs may be applied to offset the cost of providing the program.

Library partners may receive permission from the Library Director (or their designee) to sell their original designs or creative works as part of a library program. It is strongly recommended that partners donate a portion of their proceeds from sales at any library event to the Friends of the Northborough Library, Inc. The sale of unauthorized products and services will not be permitted.

LIBRARY PARTNERS

Anyone interested in partnering with the library to present a program may submit a proposal that will be reviewed by appropriate library staff using this policy as a guideline. Not all proposals will be accepted. Proposals will be kept on file for one year. The library reserves the right to decline a program for any reason.

Partners must comply with all library policies. Partners receive acknowledgement in marketing and PR materials.

Library programs are non-commercial in nature. Programs are not used for the solicitation of business. Presenters and performers, whether individual or organizational, shall not use a library program to petition, advertise, or recruit members or customers. While the library welcomes professional experts to present at its events, library programs cannot be used to directly further commercial, religious, political, or partisan purposes. Presenters are permitted to have business-related brochures, flyers, or other information available for attendees to pick up if interested, but may not distribute such materials as part of the event or presentation.

Individuals reserving spaces within the library for meetings or events are not considered library partners. These programs are not sponsored by the library. Such groups are responsible for their own marketing.

ACCESSIBILITY

Patrons needing assistive listening devices, on-site sign language interpreters, closed captioning, or other reasonable accommodations for library programs should inform the Library Director or Assistant Library Director at least one week before the day of the event to ensure availability of services.

ATTENDANCE

The library provides free and open access to its programs for patrons of all ages and backgrounds. Attendance at library programs may be designed with specific audiences in mind, and as such may be limited to that specific audience. Programs restricted to a specific audience will be publicized as such.

When the safety, cost, or success of a program requires it, the library may limit attendance, either through advanced registration or at the door. In such cases, admittance shall be based on a first come, first served basis.

The library requests that registered individuals notify the organizers as soon as possible if they are unable to attend an event in order to allow other people to attend. Registered individuals who do not show up for a program and do not notify organizers that they are unable to attend will be considered a no-show for the event. No shows will lose program registration privileges for one month.

Even in the event of preregistration, the library does not guarantee seating once a program has begun. Library staff reserve the right to admit waitlist or walk-in attendees once a program has begun if there are unclaimed spots.

Last updated: January 2026

Approved by the Library Trustees on: January 13, 2026

Request to Reconsider Library Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a process for residents to request that the Board of Library Trustees revisit an approved policy.

Requests to reconsider a library policy may be made to the Board of Library Trustees by any Northborough resident. Requests must be in writing and must include the following information:

- Full name
- Northborough street address
- Contact information for follow up
- Policy to be reconsidered
- Sufficient explanation of the language to be reconsidered and the reason for requesting reconsideration
- Desired outcome of request

Requests may be hand delivered, mailed, or e-mailed to the Administrative Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees, care of the Library Director.

Once received, the Library Director will forward the request to the Chair of the Administrative Subcommittee and the Board Chair. The Subcommittee will meet and review the request within 30 days of receipt. The resident filing the request shall be notified of the meeting time and date. The Subcommittee may, at its discretion, request additional information about the request from the resident.

A summary of the review, including the Subcommittee's decision, will be drafted by the Chair and sent to the resident making the request within 14 days of the meeting, with copies going to the Board Chair, Library Director, and other members of the Subcommittee. The Chair of the Subcommittee shall report on the request and decision at the next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting.

Last update: November 2023

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on: December 12, 2023