

PATRON CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to provide an appropriate library environment; to ensure constructive use of Howland Public Library facilities, materials, and services; and to protect the safety and personal comfort of all our library patrons and staff, the following Code of Conduct is in effect at all times.

Anyone who violates or deliberately subverts the Code of Conduct, or who violates any federal, state, or local criminal statute or ordinance, may be banned from the library, and risks prosecution to the full extent of the law.

The Library Board has the right to amend the Code of Conduct at any time.

1. This is a public library

No patron may disturb others using the library. Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public library, such as reading and writing, using library services or attending programs. Appropriate behavior is required at all times or patrons will be required to leave the building.

Sleeping, staring, soliciting, loitering, and littering are prohibited. Repeat offenses may result in the suspension of library privileges.

Patrons may not interfere with the staff's performance of duties. This includes, but is not limited to, engaging in extended conversation or behavior that engages or forces the attention of staff for an inappropriate period of time, inappropriate personal comments, sexual advances, or physical and/or verbal harassment. These offenses may result in the suspension of library privileges.

Patrons who ignore or disobey reasonable requests from library staff or security personnel will be asked to leave the library. Repeat offenses will result in the suspension of library privileges.

Misconduct which includes, but is not limited to, the use of foul, offensive or threatening language and gestures, lewd or indecent behavior, physical or verbal harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, public drunkenness or drug usage, sale or exchange of alcohol or drugs, illegal gambling, loud talking and laughing, running, pushing, and fighting, and other offensive or intrusive behavior is not allowed on Library property. Bringing in weapons of

any kind, theft or attempted theft of library or personal property, and damaging or vandalizing property is prohibited.

The Beacon Police Department will be alerted to any behaviors that threaten the safety and security of library patrons or staff.

2. Use of library Space

Only authorized employees are permitted to enter nonpublic areas of the library.

Children's and teen areas are to be used by adults accompanied by children or teens or by adults using the resources available only in that location.

Meeting rooms are available for use by prior arrangement only. Anyone who uses a meeting room without arrangement will be required to leave the room.

The Library has the right to prohibit groups of people from congregating in the building.

The Beacon Police Department will be contacted regarding any adult in need of supervision who is left unattended in the library.

3. Children and the Library

Parents and caregivers of children under 10 must remain in the library at all times, including when a child is engaged in a library activity. Parents and caregivers are solely responsible for supervising the behavior of their children and their child's use of Library materials and equipment. Any restrictions on a child's use of Library materials and equipment rests solely with the child's parent or legal guardians. The Library cannot assume responsibility for the care and supervision of individuals. Parents and caregivers will be notified prior to any special library program when they are not required to stay.

In accordance with school attendance laws, and in support of education, children under the age of 16 are not permitted on Library property during school hours, unless accompanied by a parent, teacher, or legal guardian.

The Beacon Police Department will be contacted regarding any child or teen left unsupervised in the library building at closing time.

4. Animals in the Library

Pets are not permitted in the library except for properly identified service animals or animals licensed by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, or as part of an approved Library program.

5. Dress and Personal Hygiene

Patrons shall be fully clothed, including footwear.

Patrons shall maintain a generally acceptable standard of personal hygiene. Unpleasant body odor, which may offend other library patrons or staff, is unacceptable.

Patrons may not use the public rest rooms for bathing, shaving, washing hair, changing clothes, or other activities.

Repeat offenders may lose library privileges.

6. Smoking, Food, and Beverages

In accordance with New York State and local law, the library is a smoke-free establishment. Additionally there shall be no smoking in the areas immediately adjacent to entrances, exits, and air intake vents.

The consumption of food is prohibited except during library programs by arrangement. Non-alcoholic beverages in covered containers may be consumed.

7. Please Walk

For everyone's safety, patrons may not run or may not use roller blades, skateboards, scooters, bicycles or other wheeled transport on Library property. Only wheeled or motorized vehicles necessary for personal mobility are permitted. The library cannot be responsible for any of the above left outside the library.

8. Library Materials and Equipment

Library materials must be returned on time and in good condition. Overdue materials deprive others in need of those materials. Anyone who owes \$10 or more in fines and fees will have an automated stop on their library card. They will not be able to

take out materials or use library computers until the amount owed is less than \$10. This is Mid-Hudson Library System policy.

A library patron who deliberately alters a library computer database or destroys computer equipment will forfeit all library privileges, will be subject to financial liability for damages, and may be subject to criminal and/or civil penalties.

A library patron who vandalizes, steals, or destroys any library material, equipment, fixture, furniture, or building component, or who uses same in a manner inconsistent with customary use, or in a destructive, disruptive, abusive or potentially damaging manner likely to cause injury to the patron or others, will forfeit all library privileges, will be subject to financial liability for damages, and may be subject to criminal and/or civil penalties.

Library phones are for staff use only.

The library cannot be responsible for personal equipment, such as a laptop computer, that is brought into the library.

All briefcases, oversized handbags, carryalls, luggage, packages, overcoats, and shopping bags may be subject to inspection by library staff or security guards.

9. No Soliciting

No one may solicit, petition or distribute written materials or canvass for political, charitable, or religious purposes on library property.

10. Proper Identification

Library staff or security guards may request a patron to provide proper identification. Failure to provide such identification may lead to removal from the library. Patron concerns should be brought to the attention of Administration.

11. Revocation of Privileges

A patron whose privileges have been denied may have the decision reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

**Adopted by the Board of Trustees
November 10, 2009**