

I. Mission and General Goals

A. The mission of the Belmont Public Library is to provide quality materials and services which fulfill educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs of the entire community in an atmosphere that is welcoming, respectful, and businesslike.

B. The general library goals of the Belmont Public Library shall be:

1. To serve all residents of the community.
2. To acquire and make available to all residents of the above area such books, periodicals, pamphlets, and other services as will address their needs to
 - a) become well informed,
 - b) locate answers to important questions,
 - c) cultivate the imagination and creative expression,
 - d) develop skills for career and vocational advancement, and
 - e) enjoy leisure by means of reading and other media services.
3. To acquire the means to provide the most frequently requested material locally and upon demand.
4. To maintain a program of service which locates information, guides reading, organizes and interprets material for people of various backgrounds, and stimulates thinking and intellectual development in individuals of any age.
5. To strive consistently to discover new methods and improvements for better service for the library's customers.
6. To review regularly these goals of the Belmont Public Library and, if necessary, revise them in the light of new developments.

II. Who May Use the Library

A. The library will serve the residents and property owners of the community, the students and staff of the Shaker Regional School district, as well as employees of the town of Belmont. Service will not be denied or abridged because of religious, racial, social, economic, or political status; or because of mental, emotional, or physical condition; age; or sexual orientation.

B. The use of the library may be denied for due cause. Such cause may be failure to return library materials or to pay penalties, destruction of library property, disturbance of other patrons, or any other illegal, disruptive, or objectionable conduct on library premises.

(Updated Language June 6, 2022)

III. Patron Responsibilities and Conduct

It is a patron's responsibility to maintain necessary and proper standards of behavior in order to protect his/her individual rights and the rights and privileges of other patrons. If a patron creates a public nuisance, that patron may be restricted from the Library and from the use of the library facilities. Those who are unwilling to leave or do not leave within a reasonable amount of time, after being instructed to do so by the staff, will be subject to the law.

Young children:

The Library is intended to be a place where children are welcomed. They are encouraged to read, to explore various electronic formats, to attend programs and to make full use of the library resources.

For the safety of minor children, and the enjoyment of all patrons using the library, the library has developed and follows a specific policy regarding unattended children.

1. All children under the age of ten shall at all times be attended and adequately supervised by a caregiver over the age of fourteen.
2. Parents are responsible for the behavior of all minor children at all times, even if they are not in the library with the child. Library staff do not serve in loco parentis. If a child's behavior is not appropriate for the library, and they do not respond to appropriate guidance by library staff, the parent will be contacted to remove the child from the library. If the parent cannot be reached, and the child's behavior is deemed dangerous or unduly disruptive, the police will be called.
3. The person responsible for a child between ten and fourteen must leave a telephone number with the child, where they may be contacted or the name and telephone number of another responsible person who can transport the child home if necessary.
4. If a child is left at the library without a way home at closing time, library staff will call the child's home. The police will then be called to bring the child to the station to await pick up.
5. Parents are reminded that under the appropriate circumstances, the following State Laws may apply:

RSA 169-B:41-43 Intentional Contribution to Delinquency (of a minor);

RSA 169-B:45 Parental Responsibility for Vandalism by minors;

RSA 169-C:3 (I) and 3(XIX) Neglect of Children through Abandonment.

7. As used in this policy, the term "parent" may include legal guardians, or other persons having custody or control of a minor.

Adopted August 13, 2015.

Disruptive patrons:

In keeping with its mission to enrich, educate, connect, create, and inspire, the Belmont Public Library is committed to providing excellent customer service in a safe and inviting atmosphere conducive to the use of the library spaces and resources. Staff and library patrons share responsibilities to ensure this atmosphere is maintained at all times. The following guidelines are set forth to define those behaviors and activities that are and are not allowed on library property. Library staff will enforce these guidelines in a consistent and impartial manner.

The following behaviors and activities are examples of conduct not allowed on library property:

- All illegal activities
- Damaging, defacing, destroying, or stealing library property
- Carrying, consuming, and/or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Harassing or threatening another person or staff
- Behaving in a disorderly manner
- Panhandling or soliciting
- Sleeping
- Using library restroom facilities for inappropriate purposes such as loitering, bathing, etc.
- Smoking or use of electronic smoking devices in the library building and within 25 ft. of the main entrance outside the building
- Loitering or interfering with free passage

- Using cell phones, audio, or personal equipment in a manner that disturbs others or interferes with library use and service
- Violating computer use policies
- Bringing animals into the library except for persons with disabilities as defined by the ADA Act
- Refusing to provide library card or other identification to library staff when requested
- Leaving children under the age of 10 unattended by a responsible person
- Trespassing on library property during a banning period.

Members of the public shall not enter the building unless fully clothed including, but not limited to, a shirt or other covering of their upper bodies and shoes or other footwear. Persons whose bodily hygiene is so lacking as to constitute a nuisance or health hazard to other members of the public or to the staff create an impediment to the use and/or the provision of Library services and so shall be required to leave the building. The library allows covered drinks in the library. Food is prohibited unless as part of a library program.

Anyone who engages in any conduct deemed inappropriate by Library staff is subject to removal from library property and/or restriction of library privileges. Police will be called when conduct is illegal, when it poses a threat to the library or an individual, or when an individual refuses to leave the library when asked to do so. After any serious incident or one in which an individual is asked to leave the library, the staff member(s) on duty will prepare a written account for the Director by the end of the next working day. Persons penalized for violating the library rules may make a written appeal to the Belmont Library Board of Trustees, who have final jurisdiction. Patrons who continue to violate the behavior policy or pose a threat to the comfort and safety of other patrons and staff may have their library privileges suspended for a time period specified by the Board of Trustees on the recommendation of the Director. Patrons who are banned from the library will be notified in writing, whenever possible. Any individual subject to disciplinary action may appeal the decision of the Director to the Library Trustees. The Library Trustees require that all appeals be in writing. The individual may request a non-public meeting (RSA 91- A: 3) in person with the Library Trustees.

Adopted August 13, 2015.

[Unattended Vulnerable Persons Policy](#)

PURPOSE AND DEFINITION

Belmont Public Library strives to provide a friendly, welcoming and safe environment for community members of all ages. The Library encourages the use of our materials and services to nurture the development of a love of reading and learning. The Library is particularly concerned for the safety of vulnerable persons in and around the Library.

The Library is not responsible for their care, their supervision or for accidents or other incidents that happen to them or that result from their actions.

A vulnerable person is an individual who is mentally, emotionally, behaviorally or physically challenged to a degree that significantly impairs the individual's ability to provide adequately for their own care and/or manage their own behavior without assistance. A minor 12 years old and younger may also be defined as a vulnerable person if they are unable or unwilling to care for themselves and/or manage

their own behavior without assistance. The most senior Librarian on shift is the final authority in regard to enforcing this policy.

POLICY

All Library visitors are expected to follow the rules of conduct as outlined above Belmont Public Library's Public Policy document, (section III, Patron Responsibilities and Conduct).

Vulnerable persons who can understand and follow Belmont Public Library's Patron Responsibilities and Conduct, and can provide for their own needs, are welcome to remain in the library unattended. Vulnerable persons left unattended should have contact information for a parent/guardian or caregiver in case of emergency and be able to contact them as needed. It is not the Library's responsibility to retain this information.

Vulnerable persons who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves must be attended to and have adequate supervision at all times. A parent/guardian or caregiver 18 years of age or older is responsible for monitoring activities and managing the behavior of vulnerable persons during their Library visits. The Library does not assume responsibility for vulnerable persons while they are in the building or on Library property. If a parent/guardian or caregiver feels it is unsafe for the vulnerable person to be without adult supervision at any location, the vulnerable person should not be in the Library unattended. Parents/legal guardians assume all liability for any damage to Library property done by vulnerable people in their guardianship. Library staff are responsible for assisting all Library visitors and cannot adequately monitor unattended vulnerable persons. Library staff are not responsible for preventing vulnerable persons from leaving the Library campus, or monitoring or managing their behavior. Staff will attempt to contact a parent/guardian or caregiver if a vulnerable person's health or safety is in doubt, if the person is in distress, if their behavior disturbs other Library visitors, if their actions violate any of Belmont Public Library's Rules as outlined in this policy, or if the parent/guardian or caregiver is not present at the time of the Library's closing. Staff will contact the appropriate authorities for assistance if an unattended vulnerable person is without a ride at closing, if their behavior creates a continued disturbance to Library business, or if they pose a risk to themselves, others, or to property.

If a staff member contacts a parent or guardian or any emergency personnel, an incident report will be filled out and filed at the Library and a copy sent to the Town Hall. The witness of the incident will fill out the incident report and notify the Library Director as soon as possible. If first responders were involved, the Director will call the Secretary of Belmont Public Library Trustees as well as provide a copy of the incident report via email. The Director will also report the incident to the Trustees at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Adopted: August 8, 2022

IV. Services of the Library

The library provides materials and resources for information, entertainment, intellectual development, and enrichment of the people of the community. The library should endeavor to:

1. Select, organize, and make available necessary books and materials.
2. Provide guidance and assistance to patrons.

3. Sponsor and implement programs, exhibits, displays, book lists, etc., which would appeal to children and adults.
4. Cooperate with other community agencies and organizations.
5. Secure information beyond its own resources when requested. (Using interlibrary loan and other resource sharing methods provided through the system and state.)
6. Lend to other libraries upon request.
7. Maintain a balance in its services to various age and need groups.
8. Cooperate with, but not perform the functions of, school or other institutional libraries.
9. Provide service during hours which best meet the needs of the community, including evening and weekend hours.
10. Regularly review library services being offered.
11. Use media and other public relations mechanisms to promote the full range of available library services.

V. Responsibilities and Authorities of the Library Board

Refer to *RSA 202: A* of the *New Hampshire General Court*, the *New Hampshire Library Trustees Association Manual*, and individual library bylaws to provide basis and framework for the responsibilities and authority of the library board and individual trustees.

The Belmont Public Library encourages each library trustee to take advantage of training opportunities for trustees offered by the public library system or statewide agencies and organizations. Likewise, the Library encourages trustees to be active in the state library organization and its efforts to inform the governor and legislature of the benefits and needs of public libraries.

VI. Volunteers and Friends

The Library Board encourages individuals and groups to volunteer their time and efforts in the service of the Belmont Public Library. In appreciation of volunteer services, the Library acknowledges the need to organize volunteer activities and provide for appropriate recognition befitting the benefit to the library and the communities it serves.

A library friends group is a formal association of people who unite to plan and execute, in conjunction with library goals and the needs of the library director, programs and events to benefit the library. In particular, a friends group is often heavily involved in fund-raising for the library and often oversees periodic booksales. Friends groups always serve at the pleasure of the library board which is the only body with legal authority to set policy for the development of the library.

VII. Materials Selection/Collection Development Policy

A. Objectives

The purpose of the Belmont Public Library is to provide all individuals in the community with carefully selected books and other materials to aid the individual in the pursuit of education, information, research, pleasure, and the creative use of leisure time.

Because of the volume of publishing, as well as the limitations of budget and space, the library must have a selection policy with which to meet community interests and needs. The materials selection/collection development policy is used by the library staff in the selection of materials and also serves to acquaint the general public with the principles of selection.

The Library Bill of Rights and The Freedom to Read Statement have been endorsed by the Belmont Public Library Board of Trustees and are integral parts of the policy. The materials selection/collection development policy, like all other policies, will be reviewed and/or revised as the need arises.

B. Responsibility for Selection

The ultimate responsibility for selection of library materials rests with the library director who operates within the framework of the policies determined by the Belmont Public Library Board of Trustees. This responsibility may be shared with other members of the library staff; however, because the director must be available to answer to the library board and the general public for actual selections made, the director has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of the staff.

C. Criteria for Selection

1. The main points considered in the selection of materials are:
 - individual merit of each item
 - popular appeal/demand
 - suitability of material for the clientele
 - existing library holdings
 - budget
2. Reviews are a major source of information about new materials. The primary sources of reviews are professional library journals such as *Booklist* and *Library Journal* and publishers' resources like *Publishers' Weekly*.
3. The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title which is in demand. Consideration is, therefore, given to requests from library patrons and books discussed on public media. Materials are judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not on a part taken out of context.

D. Interlibrary Loan

Because of limited budget and space, the library cannot provide all materials that are requested. Therefore, interlibrary loan is used to obtain from other libraries those materials that are beyond the scope of this library's collection.

In return for utilizing interlibrary loan to satisfy the needs of our patrons, the Belmont Public Library agrees to lend its materials to other libraries through the same interlibrary loan network, and to make an effort to have its current holdings listed in a tool that is accessible by other libraries throughout the state.

E. Gifts and Donations

The library accepts gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be added to the collection only if appropriate and needed. If they are not needed because of duplication,

condition, or dated information the director can dispose of them as he/she sees fit. The same criteria of selection which are applied to purchased materials are applied to gifts. Memorial gifts of books or money are also accepted with suitable bookplates placed in the book. Specific memorial books can be ordered for the library on request of a patron if the request meets the criteria established by the Board. It is desirable for gifts of or for specific titles to be offered after consultation with the library director. Book selection will be made by the director if no specific book is requested. The Belmont Public Library encourages and appreciates gifts and donations. By law, the library is not allowed to appraise the value of donated materials, though it can provide an acknowledgment of receipt of the items if requested by the donor.

F. Weeding

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process. Replacement of worn volumes is dependent upon current demand, usefulness, more recent acquisitions, and availability of newer editions. This ongoing process of weeding is the responsibility of the library director and is authorized by the Board of Trustees. Withdrawn materials will be handled in a similar manner and under the same authority as donated materials.

G. Potential Problems or Challenges

The Belmont Public Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of the principles stated in this policy.

Responsibility for the reading of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from damage or theft.

H. Challenged Materials

Although materials are carefully selected, there can arise differences of opinion regarding suitable materials. Patrons requesting that material be withdrawn from or restricted within the collection may complete a "Statement of Concern about Library Resources" form which is available in the library. The inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Belmont Public Library Board of Trustees.

VIII. Circulation Policy

A. Registration

All borrowers must be registered and must have a valid patron card to borrow library materials.

Patrons must fill out an application form to register for a new library card. The following statement will be available for the patron's information and acceptance:

I agree to be responsible for all items borrowed with the library card issued in the above name, including items borrowed with it by others with or without my consent unless I have previously reported the loss of my card. I promise to comply with all library rules and policies both present and future, and to give prompt notice of change of address or loss of library card.

Identification is required. A driver's license or student ID is preferred, however, any other official ID or recent nonpersonal piece of mail showing proof of residence or property ownership, proof of town or school district employment may be acceptable.

(Wording amended June 6, 2022.)

Applicants under 13 years of age must have a parent or guardian give their consent on the application form before a new card can be issued. This parental signature is not required for children who are renewing cards.

Materials cannot be checked out until a library card is issued.

All library cards expire after two years. In order to renew a library card, patrons must produce identification and must clear all outstanding fines and bills.

B. Lost or forgotten cards

If a patron loses his/her library card, he should notify the library as soon as possible and request a replacement.

All patrons, adult and juvenile, are expected to bring their library cards with them if they intend to check out items. A driver's license, student ID, or other official ID is required if the library card is not present.

C. Loan periods

1. Two weeks for books and audiobooks.
2. Generally, reference items do not circulate. Upon request, some reference materials may be checked out overnight.
3. In general, three weeks for interlibrary loans, although this may be adjusted depending on the date indicated by the lending library.
4. Books may be renewed if there is not a waiting list for the title.
5. Periodicals may be checked out for one week.
6. One week for visual materials.

The director may establish the loan period for special collections, materials which are temporarily in great demand, such as for student projects, or materials added to the collection which are in a new format, e.g., computer software.

Patrons can borrow twenty items at one time. Visual materials are limited to five at a time, of which three can be new items.

D. Reserves

Reserves may be placed by patrons in person, over the phone, or online. Patrons will be notified when the materials are available. There is no charge to the patron for placing a reserve or for interlibrary loan services.

E. Fines and charges

There are no fines for overdue materials. A first notice is sent after the material is due. If the material is not returned within a designated period, a bill will be sent for the material with the cost of replacement of the material and a service charge for processing, cataloging and postage. Patrons who have been sent an overdue notice shall be denied borrowing privileges until those overdue materials are returned or paid for if lost and/or damaged. Substantially overdue materials may be pursued in the manner indicated by statute (RSA 202-A:25).

F. Damaged materials

If materials are damaged so as to be judged by the library as being unsuitable for the collection, the patron must pay the replacement cost. A notice of these charges will be sent to the borrower.

G. Confidentiality

As specified in RSA 201-D:11 Library User Records; Confidentiality :

I. Library records which contain the names or other personal identifying information regarding the users of public or other than public libraries shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except as provided in paragraph II. Such records include, but are not limited to, library, information system, and archival records related to the circulation and use of library materials or services, including records of materials that have been viewed or stored in electronic form.

II. Records described in paragraph I may be disclosed to the extent necessary for the proper operation of such libraries and shall be disclosed upon request by or consent of the user or pursuant to subpoena, court order, or where otherwise required by statute.

III. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any library from releasing statistical information and other data regarding the circulation or use of library materials provided, however, that the identity of the users of such library materials shall be considered confidential and shall not be disclosed to the general public except as provided in paragraph II.

The Belmont Public Library adheres strictly to all sections of this Statute regarding the protection of the confidentiality of its users.

IX. Reference Service Policy

The Belmont Public Library:

- will provide information in the form of short answers to specific questions and guidance in locating material for patrons who appear in person, call on the telephone, or request information online or through correspondence;
- will assist patrons in the use of the Library and teach basic research methodology, when appropriate
- will provide bibliographic verification of items both in the Library and not owned by the Library and will assist patrons in obtaining materials through interlibrary loan, when appropriate;
- may refer library users to other agencies and libraries in pursuit of needed information;
- may use not only the Library's resources in printed form, but consult appropriate digital resources as well as other libraries and agencies in pursuit of "ready reference" information.

XI. Public Relations Policy

A. Public relations goals of the Belmont Public Library are:

- to promote a good understanding of the Library's objectives and services among governing officials, civic leaders, and the general public;
- to promote active participation in the varied services offered by the library to people of all ages.

B. The Board recognizes that public relations involves every person who has connection with the Library. The Board urges its own members and every staff member to realize that he or she represents the library in every public contact. Good service supports good public relations.

C. Assigned staff will be expected to make presentations and to participate in community activities to promote library services. A reasonable amount of library time will be allowed for preparation and speaking. Materials to be used by press, radio, or television will be approved by the director or by assigned staff.

XII. Equipment Use Policy

Technology is available to patrons on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no charge for use of technology; however, in order to make the service available to as many patrons as possible, time limits may be imposed if others are waiting. Library staff is available for general assistance in using the computer. However, staff are not expected to train patrons in the use of application programs. Appointments for more detailed tutorials are available at the convenience of library staff.

Printers, photocopiers and fax machines are available for public use at the cost indicated on the machine.

Copy machine users are advised that there are restrictions on copyrighted materials. Any violation of copyright is the responsibility of the copy machine user.

XIII. Internet Use Policy

The Belmont Public Library is providing access to the Internet as a means to enhance the information and learning opportunities for the citizens of the library's service area. The Board of

Trustees has established the Internet use policy to ensure appropriate and effective use of this resource.

Access to the Internet is available to all patrons; however, this service may be restricted at any time for use not consistent with the guidelines. Parents of minor children assume responsibility for their children's use of the library's Internet service.

Expectations:

Users should be aware that the inappropriate use of electronic information resources can be a violation of local, state, and federal laws and can lead to prosecution. The user will be held responsible for his/her actions using the Internet. Users are expected to abide by the policies below which include generally accepted rules of network etiquette. Unacceptable uses of the service will result in the suspension or revocation of Internet use privileges.

Warnings:

The Internet is a decentralized, unmoderated global network; the Belmont Public Library has no control over the content found there. The library will not censor access to material nor protect users from offensive information, and it is not responsible for the availability and accuracy of information found on the Internet.

The library is not responsible for damages to equipment or data on a user's personal computer from the use of the library's Internet service.

The use of the Internet and e-mail is not guaranteed to be private. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the proper authorities.

Guidelines:

- Users may use the Internet for research and the acquisition of information to address their educational, vocational, cultural, and recreational needs.
- Users will respect and uphold copyright laws and all other applicable laws and regulations; they will not use the Internet for illegal purposes.
- Users will respect the rights and privacy of others by not accessing private files.
- Users agree not to incur any costs for the library through their use of the Internet service.
- Users shall not deliberately or willfully cause damage to computer equipment, programs, or parameters.

XIV. Meeting Room Policy

Due to limited space, the Belmont Public Library only hosts library-related meetings and programs. Community non-profits and town government may ask to use the space as available.

The Library is not responsible for any equipment, supplies, materials, clothing, or other items brought to the Library by any group or individual attending a meeting. The Library Board and staff do not assume any liability for groups or individuals attending a meeting in the Library.

XV. Displays and Exhibits Policy

As an educational and cultural institution, the Belmont Public Library welcomes exhibits and displays of interest, information and enlightenment to the community. Displays of handiwork,

historical material, nature study, or any other material deemed of general interest may be exhibited. The director shall accept or reject material offered for display based on its suitability and availability.

The Library assumes no responsibility for the preservation or protection, and no liability for possible damage or theft of any item displayed or exhibited. All items placed in the Library are there at the owner's risk.

XVI. Public Notice Bulletin Board Policy

Belmont Public Library bulletin boards and exhibit spaces are intended primarily for promotion of library services and activities. However, consistent with the library's role as a community information resource, these areas are available to organizations and individuals engaged in education, cultural, informational, intellectual, and charitable activities on a space available basis. The library will not accept for posting, display, or exhibit, commercial materials or advertising by profit-making agencies, groups, or individuals, campaign posters for candidates or issues, or items of a personal nature. In accepting items for posting, display, or exhibit, the library does not endorse the content of the material or the organization submitting the material.

Adopted June 14, 2011.

XVII. Revision of Library Policies

The preceding statements of Belmont Public Library's policies shall be subject to review and needed revision at least every five years by the Library Board. Individual policies will be reviewed or added as needed.

Adopted: _____

All policies reviewed or adopted by the Belmont Library Board of Trustees March- October 2019.

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