

John G. McCullough Free Library
North Bennington, Vermont
Connect. Discover. Create.

General Operating Policy and Procedure

Purpose:

Describe the overall services, functioning and operations of the John G. McCullough Free Library (the “Library”).

Governance:

The Library is governed by a volunteer board of trustees who ensure that the Mission, Vision and Strategic Goals are met, reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The board of trustees meets on a regular basis and carries out the following duties:

- Creates the by-laws
- Sets Library policy
- Hires and regularly evaluates the Library Director
- Develops strategic planning, in cooperation with the Library Director
- Ensures sound financial management
- Promotes Library use
- Encourages community engagement in Library services and programming

Mission Statement:

The John G. McCullough Library is an essential community center: a comfortable and welcoming place where people of all ages can satisfy their curiosity, stimulate their imaginations, become better informed, and connect with the online world. Our library cultivates a stable, vital and dynamic community by facilitating lifelong learning and literacy at all levels.

Vision Statement:

Connect with a variety of resources, expert assistance, and your neighbors through continuing communication about collections, services, events, and initiatives.

Discover a safe and welcoming space for all.

Create a stronger, informed, and resilient community.

Best Practices:

The Library adheres to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and guidance provided by the Vermont Department of Libraries.

Hours of Operation:

Tuesday 10:00 AM- 8:00 PM

Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday 10:00 AM- 6:00 PM

Saturday 10:00 AM- 2:00 PM

Membership:

The Library offers free membership to people of all ages without residency restrictions.

To activate their membership, a person will complete an application at either circulation desk or via the membership form on the library's website.

a. Youth memberships (under age 16 years): Library membership must be linked to an adult guarantor's account that will be responsible for all items borrowed. The youth membership will automatically upgrade to an adult membership at age 16. Library staff will not disclose a young person's borrowing history or other account information to parents of those who are age 16 or older.

b. Non-Member Patron Services: Library membership is not required for persons to participate in Library programming, computer use, reference services or in-library use of materials.

Circulation Policies:

Purpose:

To detail who can borrow items, the number of items which can be borrowed, loan terms for borrowed items, and procedures for overdue, lost, and damaged items.

General Policy:

An individual must have a McCullough Library membership in good standing to borrow items.

Membership in good standing means that a member has updated or confirmed their contact information within the past year and does not have any “lost” or “returned damaged” items on their account. When prompted, members must update their contact information to renew their accounts. Adult guarantors are responsible for items borrowed by the young people in their care.

The library recognizes that under certain circumstances, members may wish to waive some rights to privacy and confidentiality by allowing a spouse, family member, parent, or other individual to receive information about their library account (e.g. to pick up items on hold). If a member decides to waive these rights, written permission is required. Waiver forms are available at either circulation desk and are appended to this document. Once a waiver form is received, a note will be added to a member’s account to inform staff of their decision. If a member wishes to revoke this waiver, it is their responsibility to inform library staff. Adult guarantors are allowed access to account information and pick up items on hold for the young people in their care who are under the age of 16.

Members with lost items on their account or the accounts of those they guarantee cannot borrow additional items until the lost items are returned or the replacement fee is paid. Replacement fees are at the discretion of the Library Director or the Youth Services Librarian, depending on the type of item lost. Lost items cannot be renewed.

If an item is returned in damaged condition, a member’s account will be restricted until a replacement fee is paid. Replacement fees for damaged items are at the discretion of the Library Director or the Youth Services Librarian, depending on the type of item lost. Damaged condition can include the presence of strong odors.

Members with long overdue/ lost items on their account will not be able to borrow items or claim holds in the ebook and digital audiobook collection, and must either return or pay a replacement fee for lost items before this restriction will be lifted.

Fine-Free Policy:

The library does not charge fees for items returned after their due date. Donations in lieu of fines are always accepted.

Replacement fees:

If an item borrowed from another library via interlibrary loan is lost or damaged, members will need to pay the replacement cost determined by the lending library. Additional items cannot be borrowed until lost or damaged ILL items are paid for. This applies to both Catamount Library Network and CLOVER loans.

Returns:

Library items can be returned anytime via the large metal drop box on the library's front porch and at either circulation desk when the library is open. Please note: items left in the drop box after the library closes on Saturday afternoon will not be checked in until Monday morning. Members will continue to receive item due/ overdue email notices until items in the drop box are checked in.

Books: Members can borrow up to 50 books at once. New books, Inter-library loans from other Catamount Library Network libraries, and books from the Children's Collection are included in this total. The loan period for books which are no longer considered New Books is 21 days, with two 21- day automatic renewals. If another member has a hold on an item, it cannot be renewed.

New Books: Members can borrow up to 10 New Books (books which have been in the collection for less than six months). This total includes New Books from the Children's Room. The loan period is 14 days, with one 14-day renewal. If another patron has a hold on a New Book, it cannot be renewed.

Museum and Attraction Passes: Members can borrow up to two museum or attraction passes at one time. The loan period for these items is 3 days, and passes cannot be renewed. Passes cannot be reserved in advance, but members can ask to be contacted when a pass is returned. Passes can be returned at either Circulation Desk when the library is open or anytime through the drop box on the library's front porch.

Interlibrary Loans (Catamount): The McCullough Library is a member of Catamount Library Network, a group of Vermont libraries who share a catalog. This lending network grants members access to most items in these libraries' collections. Items borrowed from Catamount libraries count toward your general checkout limits. Checkout limits and terms are identical and system-wide.

Interlibrary Loans (CLOVER):

Members can borrow up to 10 items from libraries outside of Catamount Library Network at one time. The loan period for these items is two weeks. Renewals are not available for these items.

DVDs: Members can borrow up to 10 DVDs at a time, including youth DVDs and DVDs from other Catamount libraries. Only 2 of these 10 DVDs may be New DVDs or New youth DVDs. The loan period for these items is 14 days. DVDs cannot be renewed.

Audiobooks on CD: Members can borrow up to 10 audiobooks on CD at once, including Children's Audiobooks on CD. The loan period for these items is 14 days, with one 14-day renewal. If another patron has a hold on an item, it cannot be renewed and should be promptly returned.

Discovery Packs: Discovery Packs are backpacks containing books, puzzles, toys, and other items for children focused on a theme. Members can borrow one Discovery Pack at a time. The loan period for these items is seven days, and they cannot be renewed. Not all of the Discovery Packs will fit in the metal book drop on the library's porch, so they should be returned to a Help Desk when the building is open.

Magazines: The most recent issue of a magazine cannot be borrowed, but may be read in the Library. Up to 10 back issues of a magazine can be borrowed at once. The loan period for magazines is seven days. Magazines cannot be renewed.

Chromebooks: All members in good standing, including those under age 16, can borrow one Chromebook at a time. Chromebooks are only available to borrow when the library is open and must be returned to the library the same day, before the library closes. Chromebooks must be returned to the Help Desk, and should not be left in the drop box. Chromebooks cannot be borrowed overnight. A Chromebook cannot be the first item a new member borrows.

Tool Library: Members in good standing can borrow one item from our Tool Library at a time. Items from the Tool Library can be borrowed for three days, and cannot be renewed. Items from the tool library should be returned in the condition they were borrowed (clean, working), and must be returned at the Help Desk when the library is open. An item from the Tool Library cannot be the first item a new member borrows.

Meeting Spaces:

Individuals and groups of patrons are welcome to use the public central table in the Library as meeting space during normal operating hours. The library does not provide space for for-profit meetings, and private workshops on the first floor.

The Laura Nowak Memorial Meeting Room is available as a drop-in laptop bar and a small meeting space for up to six people. This room can be reserved in advance at the circulation desk on the library's first floor. For-profit meetings and workshops are permitted, but hosts of such meetings are encouraged to donate to the library for use of the space. Virtual meetings, including telehealth and teletherapy sessions are permitted.

The library does not provide space for hate groups (any social group that advocates and practices hatred, hostility, or violence towards members of a race, ethnicity, nation, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any other designated sector of society.) or political campaigning.

Meeting spaces cannot be reserved outside of the library's regular hours of operation.

Phone Use and Virtual Meetings:

Visitors are discouraged from answering or continuing calls in the library's main areas. Use of phones is permitted in the lobby at the front of the building and the landing on the second floor. Use of speaker phones should be limited to the Laura Nowak Memorial Meeting Room if it is not in use by other visitors. Those attending Virtual Meetings should reserve the Laura Nowak Memorial Meeting Room in advance. Headsets are required for those attending virtual meetings and are available at the circulation desk on the library's second floor.

Unattended Youth:

Children under the age of 7 years must be accompanied by an adult (example: parent, babysitter or sibling at least 16 years of age). Person responsible for the young person should not leave them alone in the Youth Services department to browse for books on the first floor, answer a phone call in the lobby or second floor landing, use the Laura Nowak Memorial Meeting Room, or use public computers.

Youth Services Department Policies:

The Youth Services Librarian is entrusted with drafting and posting policies for safe behavior in the Youth Services Department. All staff members are responsible for knowing and enforcing these policies.

Use of Library Computers and WiFi:

All Library members and visitors are free to use the public computers in the Library. Computer users should log in at the help desk before they begin their session. They may be asked to let others onto the computer after thirty minutes, during times of high computer demand.

The cost for printing or copying a document is \$0.10 per page.

Library computer users and wifi are prohibited from computer hacking or other behaviors intended to cause unauthorized access or harm to others' computer systems; any activities that compromise the safety and security of a minor; accessing sexually explicit materials; or any other use prohibited by local, state or federal law.

All library computers are shut down five minutes before closing. Users are expected to save their work and end their computer session.

Bulletin Boards:

Members and visitors may post flyers and advertisements for public events, non-profit initiatives and general community announcements on the inside of the front doors to the Library. Flyers for youth-related events and causes may be posted in the Youth Services Department at the Youth Services Librarian's discretion. For-profit and political advertising are not permitted. Library staff will assist with posting a flyer.

Service Animals:

Service animals are welcome in the Library. Pets are not allowed.

Dress Code:

Visitors and members are expected to be clothed. Tops and bottoms covering areas usually covered by bathing suits are required for everyone. Shoes must be worn at all times.

Personal Property:

The Library is not responsible for items left or unattended by visitors. Visitors are encouraged to keep their possessions with them at all times to prevent loss.

Food and Beverages:

Members and visitors may have beverages in the Library using containers with a lid and light snacks. Food and beverages are not permitted at computer stations. Visitors with food and beverages are expected to clean up after themselves.

Weapons:

The Library is a weapons free campus.

Substance Use:

Use of tobacco and e-cigarette/ vape products is not allowed on library property.

Alcohol and illegal substances are not allowed on Library property.

Library-hosted events that serve alcohol will be provided by a licensed vendor.

Visitors who are visibly under the influence of substances while on Library property or at a Library event may be asked to leave the premises.

Suspension of Library Privileges:

- Members or visitors who violate the Library policies for conduct, including guidelines posted in the Youth Services Department, may be asked to leave the Library for the day or permanently.
- Staff reserve the right to contact law enforcement if a person presents a danger to the safety of others, the collection or Library property.
- Violation of policies or disruptive behaviors may result in suspension of Library privileges, including membership and /or use of space. The decision to temporarily suspend Library privileges for the remainder of the day is based on the criteria outlined above.
- Library staff who temporarily suspend a visitor or member will complete an incident report and immediately notify the Library Director.
- Longer term or a permanent suspension of Library privileges is at the discretion of the Library Director, who will notify the Library’s Board of Trustees.

This policy will be reviewed, but not limited to, every other year by the Library’s Board of Trustees.

Initiated: April 2021

Reviewed: April 2021, May 2023

Revised: April 2021, April 2023, May 2023, June 2023

Library Director:

Date

Board of Trustees – Chair:

Date

John G. McCullough Free Library
Library Records Confidentiality Waiver

I, _____, authorize

to (please circle all that apply):

Pick up items on hold for me at the library's circulation desk.

Know the titles of items I have on hold.

Know the titles of overdue items on my account.

Signed: _____

Date: _____