

Westwood Public Library

Acceptable Behavior Policy

The Westwood Public Library is open to all; a judgment-free space for everyone, shared by the community and used by many different people for many different reasons. The Library expects each of our facilities to be clean, comfortable, and safe places for community use. To this end, the Library is responsible for establishing rules of conduct to protect the rights and safety of Library patrons, volunteers, and staff, and for preserving and protecting the Library's materials, equipment, facilities, and grounds.

To ensure individuals' rights to use the library free of disruption, library patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public library while in the building.

Use of the Library requires respect for others who are also enjoying the Library facilities and services. Parents and caregivers are responsible for the supervision of their children. Please see the ***Children and Teens in the Library policy*** for detailed guidelines. The following activities are inappropriate to the library setting and are prohibited in the library or on its grounds:

- Smoking, including electronic smoking devices in the Library or on the premises
- Disruptive behavior, such as creating loud noises, loud talking, screaming, or banging on computer keyboards
- Entering the Library barefooted, without a shirt, with offensive body odor or personal hygiene, or being otherwise attired so as to be disruptive to the Library environment
- Possession or the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or recreational drugs
- Possession of weapons including but not limited to: knives, clubs, guns, and blades
- Bicycles or scooters in any Library public area except in designated areas
- Wearing roller skates/blades in the library; Bringing bicycles or skateboards inside the building, or using them on the outdoor stairs or walkways
- Running around the building, jumping from stairways and furniture, climbing the outside of stairways
- Misuse of restrooms (including but not limited to using them for bathing, shampooing, or doing laundry)
- Bringing animals into the Library, except service animals and those part of library programming
- Verbally or physically threatening behavior
- Moving furniture
- Lying down or appearing to be sleeping in the Library; having feet on furniture; or blocking aisles, exits or entrances

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- Abusing or defacing library materials (including library-owned hardware or software)
- Misusing computers
- Interfering with another person's right to use the library or with the library staff's performance of their duties
- Soliciting or canvassing of any kind, except for ballot question petitions and nomination papers and only in lobby of both branches (please see appendix A on specifications)
- Entering areas designated "Staff Only"
- Leaving a child under the age of 10 unattended in the library
- Theft of library materials, use of false identification to obtain a library card, or use of another person's library card without permission is against state law and may be prosecuted

Additionally, failure to comply with the library's Acceptable Behavior Policy may result in a patron being asked to leave the library. If a patron does not leave when asked, the Westwood Police Department will be notified.

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Approved November 2023

Appendix A

Petitions and Nomination Papers

Both the United States and Massachusetts Constitutions protect the right to solicit signatures on nomination papers and ballot question petitions in a reasonable and unobtrusive manner in open public areas. This includes the public areas of municipal property as well as the common areas of privately owned shopping centers. Distribution of printed material in connection with signature solicitation is also protected. The right of signature solicitation (along with other free-speech activities) on municipal sidewalks, in parks and in similar open public areas is clear. *Hague v. CIO*, 307 U.S. 496, 515-16 (1939).

In *Batchelder v. Allied Stores International, Inc.*, 388 Mass. 83, 445 N.E.2d 590 (1983) the Supreme Judicial Court held that Article 9 of the Massachusetts Constitution protects the right to solicit signatures, and to distribute related printed material, in the common areas of privately owned shopping centers, subject to reasonable regulations. At least the same amount of protection must apply on municipal property that is regularly open to the general public for municipal business.

Therefore, ballot-access and nomination paper signature solicitation must be allowed on municipal property that is regularly open to the general public for municipal business, subject only to reasonable time, place and manner regulations.

In keeping with these protections, the Westwood Public Library allows the collection of signatures for nomination papers, petitions, etc. in the library building, subject to conditions set by the Library Director or their designee, as long as the collectors do not violate Mass. General Law, Chapter 272, Section 41, which prohibits disturbing people in a public library "by making noise or in any other manner."

To this end, the Library Director designates the lobby and walkways as areas in which signatures may be collected, and requires that the person(s) collecting signatures may neither interfere with the ongoing activities of the library, nor prevent library users from freely entering or leaving the building.

Nomination papers should not be left unattended in any public building as it could be construed as using public funds (such as a table or town owned pens) to support a candidate. No nomination papers may be left unattended at the Westwood Public Library.

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