

# Patron Rights and Responsibilities

The Peabody Institute Library is open to all as a judgment-free space for the many different people in our community who use the Library for many different reasons. To ensure a space for patrons and staff to utilize without worry and in a comfortable, safe environment with equitable access to our services, the Board of Library Trustees have established the following Patron Rights and Responsibilities. These guidelines are also intended for the protection and preservation of the Library's grounds, materials, equipment, and facilities in addition to its staff and patrons.

The Peabody Institute Library supports the needs and contributions of all people, regardless of any distinguishing characteristics that may cause divisiveness in our society, whether or not they are explicitly protected by law.

**All activities that follow the Rights and Responsibilities outlined below will be considered equally valid and important in the eyes of the Peabody Institute Library and will be responded to equitably by all staff.**

**A note to Caregivers:** If you have agreed to sign up your minor child for their own library card and/or if your child is physically present in the Library, your child is considered a patron with the full rights, responsibilities, and privacy of all patrons, regardless of age. For the purposes of our policies, teens (minors in grades 6-12) are considered adults in terms of their rights and responsibilities. Please see our [“Safe Child Policy”](#) for further guidelines on your child's use of the Peabody Institute Library.

## Patron Rights

In using your Library, all individuals can expect the following rights supported by our facilities and staff:

- Friendly, courteous, respectful assistance: Your needs will be met to the best of our ability
- Free and equitable access to information
- Clean, comfortable, pleasant environment
- Use of the Library without discrimination or judgement
- Privacy and confidentiality of information and physical person shared with the Library when using our website, services or locations

- Use of the Library undisturbed without threat of harm, invasion of property, invasion of personal space or interference
- Use of library items that are in good condition, free of mold, holes, debris or water damage
- Use of the Library under healthy conditions: the Library follows the most current Peabody Health Department, State and CDC public health standards. When necessary, masks, antibacterial solution and cleaning wipes will be readily available for use by patrons and staff
- Use of the Library under reasonable sound levels: the Library will provide headphones for audio devices, including computers, if necessary
- Availability of trash and recycling receptacles to facilitate the upkeep of a comfortable library space
- Availability of bicycle racks and bike locks to keep such equipment outside the building
- Availability of a staff member to place an emergency call on your behalf on a Library phone when a cellular phone is not an option
- Availability of a printed copy of this or any other Library policies upon request or should a patron be determined to be in violation of one of the Library's policies

## **Patron Responsibilities**

In order to keep your Library as a safe, welcoming space for all who choose to use it, we expect all of our patrons to adhere to public health and safety standards and other policies designed for the public good. Patrons are expected to refrain from:

- Patrons will refrain from smoking, vaping, chewing tobacco, consuming alcohol, or ingesting hallucinogenic substances on all Library property, including parking lots and outdoor areas
- Patrons will refrain from blocking sidewalks, entries or passageways
- Patrons will refrain from having bare or socked-only feet or not wearing a shirt
- Patrons will refrain from using outdoor equipment (skateboards, hoverboards, rollerblades, etc.) inside the building or on Library property, including parking lots and outdoor areas
- Patrons will refrain from defacing, removing or otherwise irreparably damaging library material, furnishings or equipment
- Patrons will refrain from putting library items in situations that could incur damage to the item's condition, including inclement weather, placing items in the hands of

someone other than the borrower or leaving items unattended, patrons will be held responsible for damage incurred while the item was in their possession

- Patrons will refrain from littering: patrons must dispose of trash, unwanted food or drink, wrappers or other empty containers in the provided trash and recycling bins
- Patrons will refrain from eating near Library computers and other technology or equipment. Non-alcoholic beverages are permitted if they are covered and not on the same surface as the Library's equipment.
- Patrons will refrain from entering staff-only or other restricted areas
- Patrons will refrain from bringing in pets that are off-leash or not carried, and visits with pets are expected to be as brief as possible. Pets that are easily riled or otherwise disruptive to other patron's use of the Library resources or any pet that interferes with a staff member's ability to do their job shall be asked to leave. Owners are responsible for harm or damage caused by pets and are expected to clean up any mess a pet may leave.
- Patrons will refrain from sleeping on Library property: the Library reserves the right to call 911 or the non-emergency police line for assistance if there is a concern for the patron's health or safety
- Patrons will refrain from leaving personal property unattended: the Library is not responsible for lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed items

## **Safety**

In order to ensure an individual's right to use the Library without disruption, Library patrons and staff are expected to refrain from any disrespectful, dangerous, destructive or illegal conduct in or on any part of Library property. This includes but is not limited to:

- Rude or inappropriate behavior, verbal abuse, threats, hate speech in any form, or displaying unwanted attention to another person.
  - Any patron exhibiting this behavior will be immediately asked to leave Library grounds and follow-up restrictions may be applied should the situation warrant as determined by the Library Director.
- Caregivers are responsible for guiding their children's use of library resources. We do not impose standards applied by a child's caregiver(s) for that child on anyone else's child.
- Solicitation on Library property
- Carrying a weapon or facsimile of a weapon
- Fighting, physical abuse, assault or perpetrating physical violence against another person

- Using incendiary devices such as candles, matches or lighters anywhere on Library property
- Damaging, destroying, stealing or vandalizing Library property
- Engaging in intimidating or harassing behavior, including following or stalking other patrons or Library staff
- Shouting, pushing, hitting throwing objects or other types of boisterous behavior

### **Sound Levels**

Many patrons use the Library for work, study or quiet reading. Normal conversational tones are acceptable throughout the Library. However, patrons and staff should respect the rights of others and not engage in disruptive conversations or activities. Patrons are expected to:

- Refrain from using audible functions on devices such as cellular phones, computers and other electronics (including speakerphone, external or built-in speakers on computers, etc.)
- Headphones should be used for all audio functions on computers or other electronic devices, including online meetings, video calls, gaming, etc. Volume should be adjusted so that sound is audible only to the user

**Patrons who do not adhere to their responsibilities for keeping the library a space that is safe and accessible may be asked to leave the Library by any senior Library staff member (Director, Assistant Director, Department Head or most senior staff member present at the time). Should circumstances warrant, Library staff reserve the right to call 911 or the police non-emergency line. Under escalating circumstances, the Peabody Institute Library may work with local law enforcement to issue an order of no trespass, the length of which to be determined by Library Administration.**

### **Library Staff Responsibilities**

- Library Staff will weigh the degree of disruptive conduct with the onsite conditions at the time
- Library Staff will be tactful, courteous and firm when managing and de-escalating disruptive or dangerous behaviors
- Library Staff will clearly communicate reasons for appropriate action to the patron when enforcing Library policies

- Under no circumstances will a Library staff member touch a patron as part of a disciplinary action
- Library Staff will refrain from physical contact whenever possible during a medical emergency and use their best judgment and comfort level should they feel the patron needs contact (ex. Taking a pulse)
- Library Staff will exercise best judgment in determining whether patron conduct is in violation of this or any other Library policy
- Library Staff will explain and distribute this policy to patrons who request it or are in violation of these policies
- Library Staff will request that patrons conduct themselves in a manner that is conducive to a welcoming public library environment
- Library Staff will seek assistance from supervisors or public safety officials, including 911 or the non-emergency police line, to resolve ongoing or escalating patron conduct issues
- Library Staff will fill out incident report any time a patron's behavior needs to be corrected or intervened upon
- Library Staff will make driving their primary responsibility while operating a motor vehicle on Library business and refrain from the use of any digital devices, including cellular phones, while driving a vehicle in completion of a work-related activity. Staff is expected to pull off the road prior to engaging in any form of digital communication

**The Peabody Institute Library is here for the public's use and enjoyment. We appreciate your cooperation with all Library policies to ensure that the Library is a pleasant place to visit, that our resources are available for everyone, and that all who use our resources or work here receive fair, respectful treatment.**

***As approved by the Board of Library Trustees the 3rd day of October, 2022.***