Library Card Policy – Feb 2025 FINAL

Issuing Library Cards

Topsham Public Library is supported by the taxpayers of Topsham. Topsham residents and/or property owners are eligible for a free library card. Library cards can be obtained in person during regular library hours. To be issued a card, patrons must show a valid ID and proof of address (a lease, utility bill or current tax bill).

Topsham Public Library will not issue a library card if the applicant owes over $15.00 in fines or other charges, or any billed items, to any other Maine library.

Library cards are issued for one year. Then they must be renewed. This provides library staff with regular opportunities to verify and update contact information listed on the account.

Expectations

Topsham Public Library does not issue family cards, so a Topsham Public Library card is like a personal credit card: every patron must have their own card, and patrons must bring their card with them every time they plan to check items out.

Except in cases where a parent or guardian has co-signed the library card application for a minor, the following will apply to all patrons:

- Each patron will be financially responsible for all items checked out on their account
- Library staff will not provide account information to any third party without the consent of the patron, unless legally required to do so.

All library card applicants will agree to do the following:

- Obey the rules and policies of the library
- Return items in a timely manner
- Pay all charges levied against their account in a timely manner
- Notify the library immediately if:
    - Their card is lost or stolen
    - Their address, phone number or email address changes

Children and Teens

Children ages 11 and under may be issued a library card when a parent or guardian with appropriate ID co-signs their library card application. The parent or guardian who co-signs will have access to the account information, including which items are checked out, and will be financially responsible for those items.

Teens ages 12-17 may be issued a library card that is co-signed or not co-signed, but they may not hold each at the same time.

Co-signed:

- A parent or guardian with appropriate ID will co-sign the library card application
- Any borrowing limits will be the same as for an adult's card
- The parent or guardian who co-signs will retain access to the account information, including which items are checked out, and will be financially responsible for those items.

Not co-signed:

- The patron will provide ID and proof of address (if they have it)
- The following borrowing limits will apply:
    - Ten items maximum. This may include up to one A/V item owned by Topsham Public Library, as well as items borrowed from other libraries through the online requesting system.
- The patron will be financially responsible for all items checked out on their account
- The library will not disclose account information, including which items are checked out, to any third party - including a parent or guardian - without consent of the patron.

Fees for Nonresident Library Cards

Nonresidents who wish to borrow materials directly from Topsham Public Library may be issued a card according to the following fee structure. The fees listed below may change annually with the new budget year.

- Standard rate: Cards may be issued for three months or one year at a rate similar to the one Topsham residents and landowners pay for library services through their taxes. The current fees are:
    - Three months: $20.00
    - One year: $75.00

- Discounted rate: Cards may be issued for one year at a discounted rate (currently $30) to the following groups:

    - Minors (ages 17 and under).
      (Apart from the fee, nonresident minors will be issued cards under the same guidelines as resident minors, as outlined in the “Children and Teens” section above.)
    - Adults who are actively enrolled in a formal education program; must show current student ID or registration materials

- Fees waived: Cards may be issued with all fees waived to the following groups:
    - MSAD 75 teachers and school librarians, for curriculum-related materials to be used by students and/or staff of their schools; must show current MSAD 75 ID
    - Employees of Topsham Public Library and the Town of Topsham; verification of employment status required

Limited Access

Topsham residents who are not immediately able to present proof of address may be granted limited, temporary borrowing privileges in one of two ways:

- Those who can visit the library but don’t yet have proof of address because they moved to town recently may be allowed a single check-out of two items only
- Those who are temporarily unable to visit may sign up online to access the library’s digital materials platform for a limited period

In both cases, patrons will receive full borrowing privileges when they are able to present proof of address.

Sanctions

Patrons who lose or severely damage library materials will be charged the full replacement price. In such cases, borrowing privileges will be suspended until the charges are paid or, in the case of a lost item, the item that was lost is recovered and returned.

Unless advance permission has been granted, patrons may not submit a replacement copy in lieu of paying the charge for a lost item

With permission of the Library Director, a teen patron may be allowed to pay off a library charge by completing an assignment of volunteer work, the duration of which will be determined according to a pre-established formula.

Patrons who routinely return materials damaged or routinely fail to return materials until they have been billed may have their borrowing privileges suspended or restricted.

Patrons who violate library policy or who fail to pay charges for lost or damaged items may be restricted from using library property, including computers, or may be expelled from library premises by the Library Director for a specified or indefinite period of time.

Those whose privileges have been restricted or withdrawn have the right to appeal in writing to the Library Board of Trustees.

Updated February 19, 2025