Community Use Agreement

Our library is a shared public space for reading, learning, gathering, and exploring ideas. This Community Use Agreement outlines the expectations of behavior that help us maintain a welcoming, safe, and comfortable environment for everyone.

For the purpose of this agreement; library property includes the building, grounds, parking lots and vehicles. Failure to meet these expectations may result in suspension of privileges; see Appendix 1.

Library Use Expectations

I. Respect for People

1. Interact with others in ways that are courteous, welcoming, and non-threatening.
2. Allow others to read, study, use computers, and participate in activities without harassment, intimidation, or unwanted attention.
3. Keep conversations and device volume at levels that do not disturb others by using headphones.
4. Follow guidance from library staff, who are here to support a positive experience and ensure that the space works well for everyone.
5. Parents and caregivers actively supervise children, especially those under the age of 8, ensuring their safety and consideration of others. (See Appendix 3)

II. Respect for Shared Spaces

1. Maintain a clean and pleasant environment by properly disposing of trash and keeping personal areas tidy.
2. Wear appropriate attire, including shirts, pants/skirts, and shoes, while on library property.
3. Maintain personal hygiene to keep shared spaces comfortable for everyone.
4. Remain awake while on library property, for your safety and the comfort of other visitors.
5. Keep belongings with you at all times and ensure they are not blocking entrances, walkways, and study areas. A maximum of 1 bag that measures no more than 36 inches in any direction and 2 hand-held items such as a purse, briefcase, tote or small backpack per person is allowed inside the library building.
6. Use restrooms, furnishings, and equipment responsibly and for their intended purposes.
7. Store bicycles, scooters and skateboards at designated racks and refrain from skating or riding wheeled devices on library property.

III. Respect for Library Resources

1. Handle books, technology, furniture, and equipment with care.
2. Check out materials before removing them from the library building and return them in good condition.
3. Use computers and internet access responsibly and in accordance with library and legal guidelines.

IV. Health, Safety, & Legal Use

1. Library property is open to the public from 6am to 10 pm daily. In order to keep the space available and welcoming for all users, setting up tents or shelters and camping is reserved for library approved functions only.
2. In accordance with the Montana Clean Indoor Air Act, smoking and vaping are only permitted 30 feet from entrances and exits and not inside the library building.
3. Library property is an alcohol, marijuana and drug free space.
4. Service animals as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act are always welcome.
5. For everyone's safety and comfort, firearms and weapons of any kind are not permitted on library property (except by law enforcement officers and those carrying a valid concealed carry permit).
6. Illegal activity is not permitted on library property at any time.

V. Access to Designated Areas

1. Areas designated for children and teens are intended primarily for youth and the adults who accompany or care for them. Adults visiting without children are welcome when selecting children's materials or conducting other activities directly related to library services for children.
2. Staff work areas are reserved for library personnel; allow a staff member to assist with items in staff-only areas.

Appendix 1

Community Use Violation Guidelines

To ensure a welcoming environment for everyone, we ask that you follow all Community Use guidelines. Failure to comply may lead to a suspension of privileges. Repeated or severe issues could result in a temporary ban from library property. Library staff are responsible for managing disruptions to maintain a positive and productive atmosphere for all.

Enforcement Procedure

At any time if a violation of policy is severe, staff may bypass warnings and enforce immediate removal from the property.

- **Initial Violation:** A verbal warning will be issued
- **Second Violation:** Expulsion from the property for the day
- **Third Violation:** Two-week ban from library property. Continued violations after a two-week ban will result in a trespass request (See Appendix 2)

Violating a ban may result in Law Enforcement involvement. Users may appeal bans or policy actions.

Patron Appeal

Patrons may submit a formal appeal if they have been asked to leave due to policy violations, or feel library policies/staff actions have unfairly restricted their service access.

How to appeal:

- **Initial Review:** Submit a completed Patron Appeal Form. The Library Director will review it and respond in writing within 14 days. If the appeal concerns the Director, the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public Library (or designee) will handle the review.
- **Board Appeal:** If unsatisfied with the initial decision, the patron may request a further review by the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public Library in writing.

Final Ruling: The appeal will be added to the next Board of Trustees meeting agenda. After hearing from the patron, staff, and public, the Trustees will issue a final written decision within 14 days.

Appendix 2

Trespass Authority

AUTHORITY:

The Management Agreement between the City of Great Falls and the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public Library provides the Board of Trustees with the authority to Trespass individuals from library property when in violation of the Community Use Agreement.

RELEVANT SECTION FROM AGREEMENT:

> 3d. Use of Library – privileges. In accordance with Section 22-1-311, MCA, the Trustees or their designee may exclude from the use of the library any and all persons who shall willfully violate the rules of the library. The Trustees may extend the privileges and use of the library to persons residing outside of the City of Great Falls or Cascade County upon such terms and conditions as it may prescribe by its policies and regulations.
>
> **Montana Code Annotated 2023 Title 22. Libraries, Arts, and Antiquities**
>
> Chapter 1. Libraries Part 3. Free Public Libraries
>
> 22-1-311. Use of library -- privileges. Every library established under the provisions of this part shall be free to the use of the inhabitants of the city or the county supporting such library. The board may exclude from the use of the library any and all persons who shall willfully violate the rules of the library. The board may extend the privileges and use of the library to persons residing outside of the city or county upon such terms and conditions as it may prescribe by its regulations.

In that the Board of Trustees recognizes that proper enforcement of library rules is essential and that the Board of Trustees approves the Great Falls Public Library Community Use Agreement, the Board of Trustees also recognizes the need to trespass individuals from library property when their behavior is such that it violates the Community Use Agreement and impacts the ability of staff to function effectively and serve the community safely.

The Board of Trustees recognizes that it is also essential that the library respect the civil rights of individuals to access library services. Patrons may only be trespassed for good cause and the trespass cannot be for longer than one (1) year. If the trespassed individual desires to contest a trespass order, they may request a hearing before the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will review the trespass order and make a binding decision on its enforcement.

Appendix 3

Unattended Dependent Persons

These rules apply to children of all ages, as well as any individual visiting the library alone who cannot care for themselves.

Supervision of Children

Parents, guardians, and caregivers are solely responsible for the safety, supervision, and behavior of their children while they are on all library property.

1. Direct Supervision: Children under the age of 8 must be under the direct, close, and continuous supervision of a parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver (age 12 or older) at all times.
2. Caregiver Responsibilities: Caregivers must remain with their children, ensuring the child is safe, behaves appropriately, and does not interfere with the enjoyment of the library by other patrons. Library staff are not authorized to supervise children.

Unattended Children

An "unattended child" is defined as a child of any age whose parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver is not present in the library or who cannot be located immediately.

1. Children Under Age 8: If a child under the age of 8 is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent or caregiver. If the responsible adult is not located promptly or if the library is nearing closing time, the library may contact local law enforcement.
2. Unattended Children at Closing: The library cannot assume responsibility for supervising children after closing hours. If a child remains unattended 15 minutes past the library's closing time, they will be entrusted to the care of local law enforcement. Library staff are prohibited from transporting children home.

Approved: September 22, 2026

Board of Trustees, Great Falls Public Library