

# HAMILTON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY: LIBRARY POLICIES

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Replacing any and all previous Library Policies

Hamilton Township Public Library Board of Trustees

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# PREAMBLE

The purpose of the Hamilton Township Public Library is to support the informational, cultural, educational, and recreational needs of the community. Library services shall be available to everyone. To provide exemplary Library service, the Board realizes the need for (1) recruiting and maintaining a competent professional, clerical and maintenance staff, (2) fostering a proactive approach to maintaining and upgrading all aspects of the Library operation, (3) acting as a repository for the Township’s history and to disseminate that information, (4) efficiency of operations and fiscal responsibility, and (5) the maintenance of order to ensure fair and equitable services to all users of Library resources and facilities.

The policies herein are set forth to address the preceding needs, and in support of the Library’s Core Values, Mission, and Vision, as detailed in our [Strategic Plan](#). This document supersedes all previous statements of Library policies in whatever form they may exist, as of the date of adoption by the Board of Trustees.

# CHAPTER I - GENERAL PROVISIONS

## A. General Conduct

The following will apply to all persons within the confines of the Library:

1. All patrons are expected to behave in an orderly manner, respecting the rights of others at all times. (see [Chapter V](#))
2. Verbal communication will be kept at a low, conversational tone and volume. Audio devices played may not be audible to other patrons.
3. No food or drink (with the exceptions of bottled water, and spill-proof infant and toddler bottles/cups) shall be consumed except in specifically designated areas and in meeting rooms with the approval of the Director.
4. No alcoholic beverages are allowed.
5. Smoking is not permitted indoors or within 20 feet of the Library building.
6. The Library is a public facility and all Federal, State and Municipal laws and rules pertaining to assembly and distribution of materials apply within its confines and premises.
7. Parents and/or adults accompanied by children are required to maintain direct supervision of such children. (see [Chapter VI](#))
8. All occupants of Library premises must comply with the directives of the staff at all times. If directed by the staff to leave the building, occupants shall do so immediately in a proper and orderly fashion. Disruptive behavior or failure to comply will result in the police being called.

9. All non-public areas of the Library are reserved for staff use only and are “off-limits” to patrons.
10. Access to the Library building outside of normal hours of operation for purposes other than meeting room usage must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

#### B. Hours Of Operation

The normal hours of operation of the Library shall be Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

#### C. Holiday And Scheduled Early Closings

1. Specific dates of closure are subject to negotiated agreement. In general, the Library shall be closed in observance of the following: New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Day, President’s Day Weekend, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Election Day, Veteran’s Day, Thanksgiving Day, Thanksgiving Friday, and Christmas. The Library will be open on the Saturday of three-day weekends unless the holiday being observed falls on Saturday.
2. The Library will close at 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve, Thanksgiving Eve, and New Year’s Eve.
3. In the event of an officially declared State of Emergency or the closing of Hamilton Township Municipal offices, the Library shall be closed.

## CHAPTER II – BOOK AND MATERIAL SELECTION

The professional Library staff, under the guidance of the Library Director, shall determine what books and other print and non-print materials (hereinafter “materials”) shall be selected and retained in the Library

- A. In selecting or retaining materials, the Library is guided by the Mission, Vision, and Core Values set forth in the Library’s Strategic Plan, and by the statements, guidelines and policies of the American Library Association, including the Library Bill of Rights (Addendum 2).
- B. Materials selection is based on the professional knowledge and judgment of the librarians and Library Director. This knowledge includes familiarity with different formats and types of materials, the strengths and weaknesses of the existing collection, and awareness of the needs of the community. Librarians consult standard bibliographic works and published reviews in professional and general periodicals in evaluating available materials. In most cases, the library will not purchase self-published materials that are not reviewed in these established review journals.
- C. The Library will collect local and state historical materials. Legal, technical and medical works will be acquired only to the extent that they are useful to the general public. Textbooks may be purchased when the subject content constitutes the best available source of needed information. It is not the responsibility of the Library to supply textbooks or curriculum material used in the local schools, nor multiple copies of a title sufficient to meet the simultaneous need of every student in a class.
- D. The selection of all Library materials shall be as objective as possible, and not affected by the personal beliefs of the selector.
- E. No materials will be denied inclusion in the Library collection solely because they present ideas that may be unpopular or offensive to some. The presence



of an item in the collection does not signify an endorsement of that particular item.

- F. Priority for the selection of materials and holdings shall be given to that subject matter which best reflects the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs of our diverse community.
- G. Materials suggestions from patrons are welcome and are given serious consideration, subject to the selection criteria established herein.

# CHAPTER III – LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP AND CARDS

The purpose of the Hamilton Township Public Library’s membership and circulation policies are to: help patrons easily and conveniently borrow books, DVDs, CDs and other material from the Library’s collection, utilize electronic resources, and protect public property shared by all residents of Hamilton Township.

## A. Eligibility for Card

Anyone who lives, works full-time, attends school and/or owns property in Hamilton Township is eligible to receive a library card granting full privileges. There is a \$75.00 annual fee for persons who are otherwise ineligible to receive a library card. This nonrefundable fee must be paid annually when the library card is renewed.

## B. Application for a Library Card

All applicants must appear in person to complete and sign a Library Card Application. Applicants ages 17 and under must have applications signed by a parent or a legal guardian. Applications must be supported with appropriate forms of identification. No one may have more than one active library card at any one time.

## C. Forms of Identification

(Note: The acceptance of eligibility documentation is at the sole discretion of the Library.)

1. Adults - Applicants must present a valid driver’s license or other photo identification showing their current address. If the identification does not have an address, a combination of photo ID and a current utility

bill and/or other authentic mail addressed to the applicant will be sufficient.

2. Minors under the age of 18 years - Applicants must be present with their parent or guardian who may use identification as noted above. Parents and guardians must sign the minor's application, acknowledging that they are responsible for all usage of the minor's card. Legally emancipated minor applicants must present a photo ID, address verification documentation and court documents verifying their emancipation.
3. Nonresidents who work in the Township - Applicants must present a current employment ID or pay stub, along with a photo ID.
4. Nonresident students aged 18 and over, who attend school in the Township - Applicants must present a school ID, tuition bill or other verification of enrollment in addition to a photo ID.

#### D. Use of the Library Card

A valid Hamilton Township Public Library card (or valid photo ID proving you are a cardholder) is required to borrow materials from the Library. Cardholders must sign their library card before it is used and present it to borrow materials. The cardholder bears full responsibility for all items borrowed using the card and for any fees that may be assessed to their card, unless the card is reported lost or stolen (see below).

#### E. Cardholder Responsibilities

By applying for and accepting a library card, the cardholder agrees to:

1. abide by all Library policies;
2. assume full responsibility for items charged to their card;

3. pay all fees assessed by the Library in accordance with Chapter IV for the materials charged to their card;
4. pay for any lost or damaged materials charged to their card, in accordance with Chapter IV, below;
5. promptly report if their card is lost or stolen; and
6. promptly report any change of address.

#### F. Damaged or Lost Cards

Damaged cards should be presented at the Library for replacement at no charge. Cardholders should report the loss or theft of their cards immediately. Replacement cards will be issued at a cost of \$1.00 upon presentation of appropriate identification. The cardholder will no longer be responsible for materials charged to lost or stolen cards from the date of the replacement; however, that cardholder remains responsible for all card activity up to the date of reporting the loss or theft.

## CHAPTER IV – BORROWING MATERIALS

The Library aims to provide and promote the greatest possible use of its collection of books, DVDs and other items by our patrons. The Library’s policies are intended to provide convenient and quick access to the collection. As a steward of public resources, the Library also must enforce reasonable policies for ensuring that its resources are equally available to all Library users and protected from loss, theft, or vandalism. The purpose of the Library’s policy is to balance these two goals, thus it is essential that a valid Hamilton Township Public Library card or valid photo ID must be presented each time items are borrowed from the Library.

### A. Late Fees

Studies show that library fines present economic and social barriers to access to library services, information, and materials. In 2019, The American Library Association adopted its [“Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity,”](#) urging public libraries to “scrutinize their practices of imposing fines on library patrons and actively move towards eliminating them.” In accordance with this ALA guidance, as well as the Library’s [Core Values, Mission, Vision, and Strategic Initiatives](#) (see “Strategic Initiative #2, Access to Information”), the Hamilton Township Public Library will permanently waive all new and accrued late fees.

## B. Borrowing Guidelines

Materials	Load Period	Maximum Items Charged to a Card	Patron Type that Can Borrow Item
Books (hardcover and paperback)	28 days	N/A	Adult & Juvenile
New Books	14 days	N/A	Adult & Juvenile
Music CDs	14 days	4	Adult & Juvenile
Books on CD	14 days	4	Adult & Juvenile
DVD, VHS	7 days	5	Adult & Juvenile
New DVD	3 days	3	Adult & Juvenile
Magazines (back issues)	7 days	4	Adult & Juvenile

## C. Borrowing Limits

The Library may limit the number of items that may be borrowed due to demand. A patron may also be restricted from borrowing all items in a particular subject area or by a particular author.

## D. Blocks On Patron Accounts/Use Of Card

“Block on Use of Card” means that a patron may not check out any items from the Library until the block is resolved. A library card is blocked from use under these circumstances:

1. **Expired Card** - Cards are valid for a period of three years. Cards may be renewed if all charges for lost items have been paid and the card has an outstanding balance of less than \$10.00. Cards that have expired may not be used until they are renewed.

2. Lost Items – A card is blocked if a patron has any lost items charged to their card. The patron must pay for all lost items before the block on the use of the card is removed. If patrons return an item, even after it has been declared lost, the Library will remove the replacement fee from their account. Blocks for other reasons listed herein are unaffected by payment for lost items.
3. The patron has been banned from the Library for violating Library policies.

#### E. Renewing Materials

1. Patrons may renew items for two additional loan periods, if there are no other patrons who have reserved the item. If there are reserves on the item, it may not be renewed.
2. In rare instances, the Library may prevent a patron from borrowing an item if a patron is repeatedly borrowing the same item, thereby preventing other users from having reasonable access to the item.
3. Items may be renewed in person, on the phone or online.

#### F. Reserving Materials

1. Patrons may reserve items that are currently checked out or on order.
2. When a reserved item becomes available, the patron is notified and has 3 business days to pick up the item. If the patron does not pick up the item within 3 business days, the item becomes available to the next patron or is returned to the shelf.
3. A patron may have no more than ten physical items on reserve at any one time.

## G. Returning Materials

1. Items should be returned to the Library by their due date. Items returned to the book-drop by the opening hour of the Library for that day are counted as being returned on the previous day.
2. Inter-Library Loan items should not be placed in the book-drop but returned inside the Library to the desk at which they were picked up.

## H. Lost Items

An item is declared lost if it is reported lost by the patron who borrowed the item, or the item has been overdue for more than 30 days. After 30 days the patron will be responsible for the full current replacement cost of the item. If a patron has an item on their record that has been declared lost, the item must be resolved before additional items can be borrowed.

## I. Damaged Materials

If an item is damaged and cannot be returned to the collection, the patron is responsible for the full cost of the item. The Circulation Manager or designee will determine if the item is still usable.

## J. Exceptions To Circulation Policies

The Library Director, Librarian in Charge or Circulation Manager may grant an exception to any Circulation Policy due to special circumstances.



# CHAPTER V – BEHAVIOR POLICY

## A. General

No individual may engage in inappropriate conduct on the premises of the Hamilton Township Public Library, or when using Library facilities, or when participating in Library programs. Patrons shall be engaged in normal activities associated with the use of a public library while in the building. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying, or using Library materials or computers may be asked to leave the building.

## B. Violation of Library Policy

Violation of Library policy will result in increasing levels of action for the remainder of the day, to the patron's temporary or permanent loss of all Library privileges, to legal action including criminal prosecution. The level of action shall be determined on a case by case basis. Any person who is banned from the Library may request an appeal to the Library Board of Trustees. (see Chapter V(G) - Appeals Procedure)

## C. Inappropriate Behavior

Inappropriate behavior shall include, but is not limited to, the following conduct or behaviors:

1. Committing or attempting to commit any act that is in violation of Township, County, State, or Federal law.
2. Possessing, selling, distributing, displaying or using any dangerous weapon upon Library premises, or using or threatening the use of any other object in such a manner that it may be considered a weapon.
3. Engaging in any physically or verbally intimidating or assaultive behavior, including any threats of violence or unlawful activities. The Library has a policy of zero tolerance for threats and acts of violence.

Any persons engaging in such behaviors will be immediately ejected from the Library.

4. Possessing, selling, distributing, consuming or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or controlled substance.
5. Trespassing by entering or remaining on Library premises after having been notified by an authorized individual not to do so, and entering or remaining on the Library premises during the period in which an individual has been banned from the premises.
6. Refusing to follow the directions of Library staff, including failure to take shelter in an emergency as directed by staff.
7. Engaging in any behavior that is disruptive, harassing, or threatening in nature to Library users or staff including stalking, prolonged staring at or following another with the intent to annoy or intentionally behaving in a manner that could reasonably be expected to annoy or disturb other patrons.
8. Patrons whose hygiene is so offensive as to constitute a nuisance to other Library users may be required to leave the building.
9. Engaging in any sexual contact, activities, or conduct.
10. Selling, soliciting, surveying, distributing written materials, panhandling or canvassing for any political, charitable, or religious purposes inside a Library building, doorway, or vestibule without prior authorization of the Library Director or designee.
11. Smoking, electronic cigarettes, vaping, and tobacco or marijuana use in any form are not allowed inside or within twenty feet of the Library.
12. Eating (except in designated areas).
13. Drinking anything but bottled water.

14. Sleeping, napping or dozing on Library premises.
15. Engaging in excessive or disruptive conversations, talking loudly, using personal electronic equipment at such a volume or making ongoing noise that is unreasonably disturbing to other Library users.
16. Not wearing shoes or shirt within the Library.
17. Moving furniture without the express consent of the Library staff or use of furniture in any manner that may damage the furniture, including placing feet on the furniture.
18. Using Library materials, furniture, equipment or facilities in any manner inconsistent with the customary use thereof, or the theft or intentional damaging of Library materials, furniture, equipment or facilities.
19. Blocking of aisles with personal items or leaving such items unattended on Library premises at any time. Items may be removed from the Library premises if they reasonably appear to be abandoned or have been left unattended for 30 minutes or more.
20. Interfering with the safe and passage of Library staff or patrons on the premises, including but not limited to the placement of objects in hallways, aisles, flooring or elsewhere in a manner that impedes the free passage of such persons about the Library.
21. Bringing any animal into the Library, except service animals.
22. Entering non-public areas of the Library without permission.
23. Improperly using library restrooms or facilities for purposes such as bathing, shaving or changing clothes.

24. Adults not accompanied by a child shall not loiter in the children's room if the adult is not actively reading, studying, and /or using Library materials from the children's collection.
25. Taking Library materials into restrooms.
26. Engaging in any other activities that are inconsistent with those activities normally associated with the use of public library facilities.
27. Violating Library Internet Acceptable Use Policy. (see [Chapter VII](#))
28. Taking photographs or videos of Library patrons or staff without their permission.

#### D. Staff Response to Infractions

Violation of these rules is misconduct that can result in expulsion from the Library and forfeiture of Library privileges. Minor violations of these rules will first result in Library staff attempting to educate and warn individuals about the policies. If an individual continues to violate these policies, staff may order them to leave for the day. However, any conduct that threatens the life or safety of any person or that is damaging to Library property, equipment or facilities may result in immediate expulsion from the Library premises. Library staff are authorized to contact the Hamilton Police Department to respond to such situations. Repeated misconduct or severe offenses (even if a single isolated event) may result in individuals being banned from the Library. Staff will follow the established procedures below. Staff will call the police for severe or illegal behavior, or when an individual refuses to leave when told to do so.

#### E. Banning Procedure

After staff determines that a person has engaged in severe or repeat misconduct, and staff has determined that the individual should be banned:

1. Director or designee will issue a written ban letter to the individual involved. The letter shall indicate the reasons for the ban and the time period of the ban.
2. Director or designee will inform all staff with a description of the underlying behavior and the name and the description of the banned individual. The Director shall notify in writing the banned individual, all staff, and the Library Board of Trustees President about the decision. The Director shall also notify the banned individual of the process for appealing the ban.
3. The Director will review and may reconsider the decision to ban an individual upon written request of the individual, and may shorten or terminate the banning period if information submitted by the individual warrants such modification. Until such time as the banning letter has been reviewed and/or modified by the Director or reversed on appeal by the Library Board of Trustees, the individual may not use the Library.

#### F. Alternative Juvenile Banning Procedure

As an alternative to banning a juvenile, a supervisor and a staff member may restrict a juvenile from independent use of the Library for a period of 30 (first restriction) days or 90 days (second restriction). The juvenile whose Library use is restricted may use the Library during the specified period only when the juvenile is accompanied by a responsible parent or guardian. The juvenile's parent or guardian must be notified of the restriction via certified mail. Failure to abide by the restriction may lead to banning of the juvenile from all Library premises.

#### G. Appeal Procedure

##### 1. Notice of Appeal

The Director's written determination may be appealed to the Library Board, if the aggrieved individual files a written notice of appeal within 10 days after he/she receives the determination. Such notice shall be filed with both the Library Director and the Library Board President, c/o Hamilton Township Public Library, 1 Justice Samuel Alito Jr. Way, Hamilton, NJ 08619. The Board shall hold a hearing within 30 days after the notice has been filed. The banned individual shall be notified at least 10 days before the hearing.

## 2. Hearing

At the hearing, the individual may present evidence, and may call and examine witnesses and cross-examine witnesses. The President of the Board of Trustees shall conduct the hearing. The proceedings shall be recorded.

## 3. Decision

Within 30 days of the completion of the hearing, the Board shall issue a written decision. The Board shall have the power to affirm or reverse the written determination or to remand it to the Director or designee with instructions for reconsideration. The decision, except for remand, shall be a final determination for the purposes of review.

## H. Non-Compliance with Ban/Trespassing

If a banned individual enters the Hamilton Township Public Library before the return date listed in the ban letter, police will be called and the individual may be arrested for trespassing.

# CHAPTER VI – UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY

The Library is a public building and as in all public buildings, public safety is a real concern. Library staff cannot and should not be expected to prevent children from interacting with or leaving the Library with a person who is not an appropriate chaperone. Responsibility for a youth using the Library rests with the parent or guardian, not with Library personnel. An unattended child is defined as a young child who is unable to care for him/herself when left at the Library without another adult in sight/sound range; any child left alone for a long period of time; or any child not picked up at closing time.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians/caregivers to supervise their children while they are using the Library. The Library is not responsible for any consequences of parents ignoring their responsibility.

The Unattended Children Policy is as follows:

- A. Parents are always responsible for their children's actions while they are using the Library. Children must follow the rules of appropriate behavior in the Library and direction given to them by the Library staff.
- B. Children under the age of 8 must have a responsible adult with them at all times. (An adult is defined as someone age 16 or older). The adult must remain in sight and conversation distance of the child at all times.
- C. Children ages 8-12 may be left unattended for short periods of time but must have a responsible caregiver in the Library at all times for the duration of the visit. The caregiver must be at least 16 years old and have a number where a parent/guardian can be reached in case of emergency.
- D. Children age 13 and above are welcome to use the Library unattended but not for extended periods of time. We expect parents to set appropriate limits for their children's Library visits.

- E. Parents should be aware of the Library hours and arrive at the Library ten minutes before closing to be certain their child is picked up before the Library closes.
- F. A child with no means of getting home at the time the Library closes is considered a stranded minor. The police will be notified to take custody of the stranded minor if he/she has no means of getting home when the Library closes to the public.
- G. If a child is left unattended, or in the care of someone deemed not responsible by the Library staff, parents/guardians will be notified and asked to pick up the child immediately. If no one is available, the staff reserves the right to notify police.



# CHAPTER VII – COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE POLICY

## A. Mission

The Hamilton Township Public Library offers Internet access to all patrons. The Library affirms the following principles and user rights as delineated by the American Library Association:

1. Electronic information, services, and networks provided by libraries should be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all Library users.
2. Libraries and librarians should not deny or limit access to information available via electronic resources because of its controversial content or because of personal beliefs or fears of confrontation.
3. Information retrieved or utilized electronically should be considered constitutionally protected unless determined otherwise by a court with appropriate jurisdiction.
4. Responsibility for and any restriction of a child's use of the Internet rests solely with his or her parents or legal guardians.
5. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 15:21-2.5(d), the Library provides the public free access to the Library's public computers and Internet services. Any Library user without a valid Library card may obtain such access by requesting a temporary one-day guest pass at no cost..

## B. The Library's Role

1. Library staff will identify on the Library's homepage specific starting points for searches and links to sources on the Internet which may be helpful to many users. Users are cautioned that (as with books and other materials) ideas, points of view, and images can be found on the Internet which are controversial, divergent and inflammatory. The

provision of access does not mean or imply that the Library endorses or sanctions the content or point of view of any of the information or commentary which may be found on the Internet. Furthermore, because access points on the Internet change often, rapidly and unpredictably, the Library cannot protect individuals from information and images which they might find offensive or disturbing.

2. Computers available to the public which can be used to access the Internet must be shared by Library users of all ages, backgrounds and sensibilities. Since staff cannot consistently and effectively monitor the public's use of the Internet, individuals are asked to be sensitive of others' values and beliefs when displaying potentially controversial information or images on public computer screens. Users are also cautioned that, because security in an electronic environment such as the Internet cannot be guaranteed, all transactions, files and communications are vulnerable to unauthorized access and use and, therefore, should be considered public.
3. The Library assumes no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from its connections to the Internet. The Library makes no guarantees, either expressed or implied, to the quality or content of the information available on the Internet. Not all the information available via the Internet is accurate, current, unbiased or complete. Users are encouraged to be good information consumers by evaluating the validity of information accessed via the Internet.

### C. Staff Assistance

Librarians will assist Library users in getting started on the Internet, with time permitting. Staff will try to answer specific questions about the Internet and offer suggestions for effective searching. Staff can also provide information about Internet training opportunities and Internet books and resources.

#### D. Library Responsibilities

The Library will install and maintain commercially available antivirus and spyware protection software on its computers and network; however the Library is not responsible for any damage done to computer users' media, data, hardware or software by any virus which may have been contracted on or through Library equipment or by the malfunctioning of Library hardware, software, or communications. The Library, at its sole discretion, may limit user access to computers and/or terminate a user's session for the purposes of problem resolution or system maintenance.

#### E. User Responsibilities

All users of the public computers and Internet are expected to use this Library resource in a responsible and courteous way, consistent with the purposes for which it is provided, and to follow all Internet-related rules, regulations and procedures as follows:

1. Any activity with pornographic material is strictly forbidden
2. Recognizing that the Internet, like all of the Library's information sources, must be shared and used in a manner which respects the rights of others and refrains from activities that prevent others from using it.
3. Refraining from illegal use of the Library's Internet resources, including using such resources to engage in harassment or defamation.
4. Respecting intellectual property rights by making only authorized copies of copyrighted, licensed or otherwise-controlled software or data residing on the Internet.
5. Respecting the privacy of others by not representing oneself as another user; by not attempting to modify or gain access to files,

passwords, or data belonging to others; and by not seeking disallowed access to any computer system via the Internet.

6. Refraining from damaging equipment or altering the setup of computers used to access the Internet at the Library.
7. Refraining from installing or running personal software on a Library computer.
8. Refraining from altering or damaging software or data stored on Internet-accessible computers.
9. Refraining from the deliberate propagation of computer worms and/or viruses.
10. Respecting time limits imposed by software.
11. User data may not be saved or stored on the hard drives of Library computers. Users must supply their own storage device, such as flash drives, to save their data.
12. A maximum of two persons may sit and/or work together at any one computer.
13. A fee of \$.20 per page for black-and-white printing and \$.50 per page for color printing will be charged.

#### F. Compliance with the Library Policy and Guidelines

Violation of the policies and regulations that govern the use of the Library's Internet resources may result in suspension or loss of the privilege to use these resources. Illegal activity involving the Library's Internet resources will be subject to prosecution by the appropriate authorities.

## G. Child Safety on the Internet

1. Parents or guardians are responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their children. Children who use the Internet unsupervised may be exposed to inappropriate or disturbing information and images. Parents are encouraged to monitor and discuss appropriate use of the Internet by their children.
2. The Library has installed and will maintain filtering software on the computers in the Children's room.

## CHAPTER VIII - FAX SERVICE

To enhance customer service, the Hamilton Township Public Library is pleased to provide fax services.

- A. Fax service is performed during the Library's hours of operation. Fax service is not available thirty (30) minutes prior to closing.
- B. Patrons needing fax service will be accommodated as soon as possible, but Library services and operations will take priority.
- C. Operation of the fax machine is limited to Library staff.
- D. A fax transmission cover sheet is available if requested. The cover sheet will be counted as an additional page in determining costs.
- E. Fax transmission fees are \$1.00 per page. International fax service is not available.
- F. Patrons must be in the Library to send faxes and wait for the fax to go through, in order to retrieve their original documents and confirmation sheet.
- G. Fax transmissions may also be received. The price for receiving faxes is \$1.00 per page. Incoming fax sheets will remain at the fax machine for the patron to collect. Patrons failing to collect faxes in a timely manner (within 24 hours) will have the charges posted to their library cards for payment at their next visit.
- H. Transmission errors are common and print quality is variable and not controlled by the Library. The Library is NOT responsible for successful transmission of outgoing or incoming faxes, nor is it responsible for any damage or loss of data or consequential damage arising out of the use of this service.

## CHAPTER IX – POSTERS AND DISPLAYS

To encourage public notice of community-related matters, the Library devotes display space to provide individuals and organizations with a free means of public expression to the community at large. This expression may, for example, consist of materials such as posters, notices, brochures, flyers, or leaflets. The Library provides designated display space to individuals and non-profit organizations, sponsoring educational, cultural, charitable, or recreational events, and to for-profit entities sponsoring similar activities or events. All materials posted or displayed must conform to the following guidelines and conditions.

- A. Before posting or display, all materials must first be presented to the Library for approval. All materials not pre-approved may be removed and discarded at the discretion of the Library Director, who reserves the right to reject any material deemed contrary to the Library guidelines or conditions, or inappropriate for public viewing in the Library. The Library Director's rejection may be appealed to the Library Board of Trustees (See Chapter V(G) - Appeal Procedure).
- B. All posters or notices affixed to the bulletin boards must be printed in clearly legible language, must not exceed 11 inches in width or 17 inches in length, and must bear a posting date in the top left corner. Once affixed, every poster or notice becomes the property of the Library, and may be removed by the Library 30 days after the posting date, or at the Library Director's discretion.
- C. All materials are assigned posting or display space on a first-come, first-served basis, in areas designated by the Library. Materials displayed on the community tables no longer deemed current may be removed and discarded by the Library if not retrieved by the exhibitor.
- D. The Library assumes absolutely no responsibility for the protection of materials posted or displayed. All those submitting such materials do so at their sole and exclusive risk.

- E. No individual or organization shall be permitted to post any notice or display any material inside or outside the Library which advocates for the election or defeat of any candidate for any public office, or advocates for or against any political or partisan proposal or position (public or private).
- F. No individual or organization shall place anywhere inside or outside the Library, any box, canister, receptacle, or any other device for the solicitation of monetary contributions for any purpose or cause.



## CHAPTER X – MEETING ROOM POLICY

The Hamilton Township Public Library is a municipal facility. As such, all laws and ordinances pertaining to the use and occupancy of public space apply to the Library. Library meeting rooms include the lower-level meeting rooms (1 through 5), and the quiet study rooms on the first and second floors. The Library meeting rooms shall be available free of charge to not-for-profit organizations to hold meetings of an educational, cultural, or civic nature, and may be available to other organizations for a fee as determined by the Board of Trustees. All meeting room usage must be reserved. If a meeting room is not reserved at a particular time, it will be available on a first come first served basis. Use of all meeting rooms on the lower level (Rooms 1-5) shall be subject to the following:

- A. Meeting room applications will not be approved for any organization or event which may disrupt the normal operation of the Library.
- B. Applications for meeting room reservations must be submitted to the Library Director or his/her designee using forms available at the Library or downloadable from the Library web site. Applications will be considered in order of receipt, and acceptance or rejection will be acknowledged.
- C. Meeting usage hours shall be limited to normal Library operations hours unless specifically approved by the Library Director or designee.
- D. The room usage fee for other than not-for-profit organizations and sponsors or organizations engaged in selling shall be \$40.00 per hour for usage during normal Library operations hours and \$100.00 per hour for approved after-hour usage.
- E. Fees for room rental may be paid with cash, credit card, or check made payable to the “Hamilton Township Public Library”.
- F. Serving refreshments is permitted and refreshments may be consumed only in uncarpeted meeting rooms and the public areas adjacent thereto. Event

sponsors are responsible for providing food, dishes, equipment, etc. and for all clean up.

- G. Subject to availability, Library owned projectors, screens, and other media generating devices may be rented by sponsors showing media for a fee of \$25.00 per device. Requests for media devices must be made at the time of booking. The Library does not provide media operators; further, the Library is under no obligation to provide technical assistance for other than its own media devices.
- H. The Library assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to any property belonging to a group or injury to members of a group which occur during the use of the facility. Groups booking meeting rooms are required to sign a hold-harmless agreement at the time of booking.
- I. Notification of event cancellation must be made to the Director at least one (1) week in advance. Failure to provide such notification will result in forfeiture of any fees paid. Organizations and/or sponsors failing to provide cancellation notification more than twice will be subject to a six (6) month suspension of booking privileges.
- J. The Library reserves the right to refuse future booking requests and to revoke forward bookings for sponsors and/or organizations determined to be in violation of these regulations.
- K. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the number and frequency of meeting room usage by sponsors or organizations when such usage monopolizes available space to the preclusion of usage by other groups and to exempt the Library's cooperating and/or contributing partners from certain provisions of these regulations and this policy.
- L. Rental fees should be directed to the Administrative Office. If payment is made by check, it must be made payable to the Hamilton Township Public

Library. Any bank fees incurred by the Library for insufficient funds will be the responsibility of the applicant. Failure to pay invalidates the reservation.

M. The Library will return fees in full, when notice of cancellation is provided to the Administrative Office at least 72 hours in advance of a scheduled reservation. With less notice, the Library will not refund fees, but will reschedule the event for another date if possible.

N. The Library will return fees if a reservation must be canceled due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances at the Library. In case of inclement weather, please verify that the Library is closed by calling 609-581-4060, or by checking the Library website, [www.HamiltonNJPL.org](http://www.HamiltonNJPL.org).

# CHAPTER XI – REFERENCE SERVICES

The Library is committed to the provision of the following reference services at a minimum:

## A. Reference and Information

Reference service will be available during all normal hours of operation.

## B. Telephone Service

Telephone inquiries may be made by calling the Library general number (609-581-4060) during normal hours of operation. If a search will require extraordinary effort, at the sole discretion of the Librarian handling the call, callers are required to provide a callback number.

## C. Inter-Library Loan Service

Inter-Library loan (ILL) service will be available to Library card holders at no charge, unless the lending/providing library levies a charge or service fee, in which case such charge or fee must be paid by the borrower.

## CHAPTER XII – NOTARY SERVICES

The Hamilton Township Public Library offers notary public services for the benefit of the patrons of our Library. Patrons seeking notary service must call the Library prior to their visit to ensure a Notary is available.

The following guidelines will be followed in the provision of Notary Service:

- A. Library Notaries are scheduled during the Library's hours of operation. Notary service is not available thirty (30) minutes prior to the time of closing.
- B. Government issued photo identification is required of any customer seeking notary service.
- C. The fee for notary service is \$2.50, or the maximum allowable by law, and service is limited to three (3) documents per person, per visit.
- D. The person who will sign the document should bring her or his own witnesses, if the document to be notarized requires witnessing. The Library will not provide witnesses, and witnesses may not be solicited from patrons using the Library. In order to serve as a witness, the witness must personally know the person whose document is being notarized and must be in possession of valid photo identification.
- E. Documents in any language other than English will not be notarized.
- F. New Jersey law requires that a notary and the customer seeking notarization be able to communicate directly with each other. Library notaries are not permitted to make use of a translator to communicate with a notary service customer.
- G. Notary service is not available for deeds, wills, living wills, living trusts, codicils, mortgages or depositions. If you have questions about the notarization of a document, call and speak with the notary before coming to the Library.

- H. Certain public documents cannot be copied and notarized. Examples of these are birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates, passports and divorce documents.
  
- I. In accordance with New Jersey Notarial Law, notaries will not provide service if the customer, document or circumstances of the request for notary service raise any issue of authenticity, ambiguity, doubt or uncertainty for the Library. In this event the Library Notary may, at his/her sole discretion, decline to provide notary service.

## CHAPTER XIII - MUSEUM PASS PROGRAM

The Hamilton Township Public Library offers patrons passes to visit a variety of museums free of charge. Our aim is to provide our community with access to various cultural, educational and historical institutions.

A. The library offers two different options to utilize the museum pass program

1. Printable passes: These can be printed from a patron's home, the library circulation desk, or anywhere an internet connection is available. Printed passes must be taken to the museum on the "Day of Use". Patrons do not need to pick up or return these passes to the library. The patron's name and the date of the reservation will appear on the pass. Passes may also be downloaded via a smartphone by clicking on the "Pass info" link on your confirmation email.
2. Physical passes: These may be picked up at the library beginning at 3 p.m. the day prior to the "Day of Use" and must be returned by 11 a.m. the day after the "Day of Use". For example, if the "Day of Use" is Friday, the pass may be picked up beginning at 3 p.m. on Thursday through closing on Friday, and returned by 11 a.m. on Saturday. If the library is closed, passes will be due by 11 a.m. the next day the library is scheduled to be open. Please check library hours of operation before picking up or returning a pass.

B. Museum passes may be reserved online using a valid adult Hamilton Township Public Library card number or by calling the Circulation desk at 609-581-4060 x 4001. Reservations may be canceled using this same number.

C. Museum pass reservations may be made up to 60 days in advance.

D. Late return of a pass will result in a charge of \$10 per day. A pass will be considered lost if not returned within 7 days of the "Day of Use". The charge for a lost museum pass will be the cost of the replacement (varies by museum) plus a \$10 processing fee.

E. Membership conditions of each museum vary. For details, check the library website.



# CHAPTER XIV – GIFTS AND DONATIONS

## A. Donations of Materials

The Library will accept donations of books, periodicals, pictures, audio-visual materials, electronic media, and the like in good condition which may be added to the Library collection, if, and only if, they are deemed consistent with the criteria and principles used in selecting materials for purchase.

## B. Donations of Consequence and Restricted Gifts

The Library will accept restricted gifts only when the benefit of the gift to the Library is deemed to exceed any costs of administration of the restriction(s) and/or maintenance of the donation.

## C. Transfer of Ownership

Materials and gifts donated to the Library become the exclusive property of the Hamilton Township Public Library and its Board of Trustees, which may exercise its sole discretion regarding the ultimate disposition of such material or gift.

## D. Disposition of Donated Items

The Library reserves the right to reject a donated item for any reason, and is not required to notify the donor of the disposition of any item. Donations may be added to the collection, sold by the Friends of the Library, or discarded.

# CHAPTER XV – USE OF CELL PHONES IN THE LIBRARY

The purpose of the policy is to promote a user-friendly environment that is conducive to study, information retrieval and Library enjoyment. All Library users are expected to be courteous and respectful of others by adhering to the following rules for cell phone usage within the Library:

- A. Cell phones should be turned off or set to vibrate upon entering the Library.
- B. Brief cell phone conversations may be conducted in the Library lobby.
- C. Callers should speak quietly so as not to disturb others around them.
- D. Extended or potential loud conversations should be conducted outside the building. Callers are cautioned to take any belongings with them if they move to take or place a call. The Library is not responsible for the personal items of users.
- E. Text messaging is permitted throughout the Library provided that any and all audible signals and/or alarms are turned off.
- F. Library staff may require that persons engaged in cell phone conversations move to a designated area.

## CHAPTER XVI - GRANTS

The Board of Trustees is charged to continually identify sources of additional funding for both normal operations and special needs. The following governs such activity.

- A. All grants to the Library must be approved by the Board of Trustees.
- B. The Library will not pursue grant opportunities outside of its mission; however, it may be party to grant opportunities that benefit its broader constituency; such as the Township of Hamilton, Hamilton Township Not-for-Profit entities, Friends of the Library, etc.
- C. Grant application may not be made without prior consent of the Board of Trustees and its consideration of the impact on policies, practices and procedures.
- D. The Library will not pursue grant opportunities that will increase continuing operating costs after the initial funding period unless the benefit of such opportunity expands Library services into an area of envisioned future services.

## CHAPTER XVII – PERSONNEL

- A. Policies pertaining to recruitment, appointment, salaries, promotion, tenure and dismissal and retirement must be in accordance with the NJ Civil Service regulations as well as contractual agreements. Position/Titles may, when necessary, be revised by the Trustees and submitted to Civil Service.
- B. The Library will conform, in general, to NJSA to ensure that the normal working conditions for all employees shall relate to the standards indicated by the New Jersey Library Association, and that all staff members have conditions of employment that afford job satisfaction and ensure high morale.
- C. All employees of the Library shall adhere to and abide by the official Employee Handbook of the Township of Hamilton, and any policies governing Hamilton Township employee conduct, as may be amended from time to time, unless specific exception is made by approved resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Library.
- D. The Library is a public institution supported by taxation and it thus belongs to the people. Therefore, the first duty of the Library staff is service to the public. Each patron should be given friendly, courteous and prompt service. All patron requests will be given professional attention.
- E. Residency in the Township of Hamilton shall be a requirement for consideration for appointment to non-professional positions and residents of the Township of Hamilton who meet the requirements of a professional position being recruited shall be granted preference in hiring.
- F. The Library affirms that staff attire standards add value to the staff culture and affect the image presented to patrons and visitors. No dress code can cover all contingencies. Employees are expected to exercise a certain amount of judgment in their choice of clothing to wear at work. Examples of

appropriate and inappropriate attire per this policy follow. Any questions about acceptable dress for work should be addressed to the Library Director.

- a. Standard dress for Library employees, with the exception of maintenance staff, will be, at a minimum, business casual. Library workers often have to bend, stretch, climb up or work in the stacks. Business casual is defined as a collared shirt, t-shirt, and khaki style pants, dress pants or jeans, a blouse, sweater, skirt, or dress.
- b. Jeans should be clean and in good condition, free of any tears, fading or fraying. Leggings are acceptable when worn with a longer top garment. Sweatpants, pajama pants, and form-fitting athletic wear are not acceptable.
- c. Shoes should be suited for the job at hand, comfortable, and correctly sized. Flip-flops or thong sandals should be avoided. Shoes of this type expose a great deal of the foot and could easily exacerbate injury caused by a dropped object.
- d. Attention to personal hygiene is encouraged. Perfume and cologne should be worn in moderation to aid persons who may be sensitive to strong fragrances or allergic to the components of such products.
- e. Jewelry should not be of such nature as to interfere with job performance or to impede the safe operation of machinery.
- f. Head coverings that are required for religious purposes or to honor cultural tradition are acceptable.

# CHAPTER XVIII – STAFF DEVELOPMENT

## A. Attendance at Meetings

The Director or a staff member and one Trustee, may have their way paid to at least one convention or other meeting relative to Library work each year. A special line item for this will be included in the budget each year. Additional meetings or delegates will be governed by time and distance elements, not to exceed budgetary items appropriated for this purpose. As far as possible, the privilege of attendance at such meetings is rotated.

## B. In-service Training

The Library shall adhere to all State Library requirements for staff training. Further, upon the recommendation of the Director, the Trustees will consider arrangements so that staff members may take advantage of non-mandated opportunities for special study, as long as this does not impact on the efficiency of the individual or place undue strain upon other employees. The Library shall reimburse staff for all pre-approved expenses incurred for training.

# CHAPTER XIX – CONFIDENTIALITY OF LIBRARY USER RECORDS

A. The Hamilton Township Library maintains the confidentiality of all library user’s records based on N.J.S.A. 18A:73-43.2 as follows.

*“Library records which contain the names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of libraries are confidential and shall not be disclosed except in the following circumstances:*

- a. The records are necessary for the proper operation of the library;*
- b. Disclosure is requested by the user; or*
- c. Disclosure is required pursuant to a subpoena issued by a court or court order.*

*P.L.1985, c 172, s.2, eff. May 31, 1985”*

B. Library records are defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:73-43.1 as follows:

*“For the purpose of this act:*

- a. “Library” means a library maintained by any State or local government agency, school, college, or industrial, commercial or other special group, association or agency, whether public or private.*
- b. “Library record” means any document or record maintained, the primary purpose of which is to provide for control of the circulation or other public use of library materials.*

*L.1985, c.172, eff. May 31, 1985”*

C. This confidentiality, granted by New Jersey statute, shall also include all materials or equipment used in house, for which certain identifying information may be kept for statistical purposes.

## CHAPTER XX– MATERIAL RECONSIDERATION

Any resident of Hamilton Township holding a valid Library card may present a question, concern, or complaint regarding materials in the Library collection.

- A. Such patron questions regarding materials selection shall be resolved initially, whenever possible, by informal discussions between or among the interested parties, including the Library Director.
- B. If a complaint concerning Library materials cannot be resolved informally, the complainant may complete and file a “Reconsideration of Materials Form” with the Library Director.
  - 1. The written reconsideration request will then be reviewed by the Library Director, as well as the relevant Department Supervisor and librarians.
  - 2. This committee of review will examine the subject material, and determine its compliance with the Book and Material Selection Policy (as set forth in Chapter II).
  - 3. Within no more than 30 working days (giving all parties sufficient time to review the materials in their entirety), the Library Director shall report the written findings and decision of the committee to the Board of Trustees, and present such at the next regular, scheduled meeting of the Board.
- C. If the review committee’s decision is to affirm the selection or retention of the material, the complainant may appeal the matter, in writing, for review and final decision to the Board of Trustees.
- D. If the review committee’s decision is to remove the material, the matter shall be automatically reviewed by the Board of Trustees.
- E. In the case of Board of Trustees review under items C or D above, the Board shall take no more than 30 working days to fully review the material and



complaint, and the matter shall be added to the first regular, scheduled Board meeting after the review period. At the discretion of the Board, a special public meeting may be called. The decision of the Board of Trustees to retain or remove materials shall be final.

- F. No challenged material shall be removed from the Library collection except by action of the Board, accompanied by a written statement by the Board of its reasons for the removal.
- G. All challenged material shall remain available for patron use and circulation, in good faith, throughout the review period(s).
- H. The complainant shall receive written notice of the findings of the review committee, and/or the final decision of the Board of Trustees, as appropriate.

# Addendum 1 - Code of Ethics of the American Library Association

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staff.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

- I. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
- II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
- III. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.

IV. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.

V. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.

VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.

VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.

VIII. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

IX. We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

Adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; January 22, 2008; and June 29, 2021.

# Addendum 2 - Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019. Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.