

Whitehall Public Library Policies

Title	Library User Behavior
Date Approved	3/10/2010
Amended	2/9/2011, 3/9/2022
Prepared by	Paula Kelly

Purpose:

Whitehall Public Library users have the right to expect a safe, comfortable environment when in the Library. The Library encourages people of all ages to visit, and all those entering the Library are expected to behave lawfully and respectfully with regard to public property and the rights of others.

Statement of Policy:

The following specific activities and behaviors are prohibited in the Library:

Illegal acts in violation of Federal, State, or local laws ordinances or regulations.

Disruptive, disorderly conduct, drunken, dangerous, or threatening behavior, including the use of threatening or offensive language.

Any forms of harassment (physical, sexual, verbal) of library patrons or staff.

Defacing, breaking, or injuring Library materials or property, including restrooms and lobby areas.

Smoking, vaping or the use of any tobacco or e-cigarette products.

Solicitation of any kind – see Soliciting, “Canvassing and Selling Policy”.

The abuse of any controlled substance or alcohol.

Carrying of any weapon (unless permitted by law).

Animals unless *trained guide or support* animals or animals participating in library programs.

Library Users are expected to observe the following:

Do not leave personal belongings unattended. The Library is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Turn mobile devices off or to “vibrate” when using the Library. Cell phones conversations are generally restricted to the lobby area or outside of the building.

Smoking is permitted outside of the Whitehall Borough Building entrance. The Allegheny County Health Department’s smoking ordinance states that smoking is prohibited within five

feet of any building entrance or exit. All smoking material must be properly extinguished and disposed of in designated receptacles.

All library users are expected to follow all Library computer use policies.

All library users are expected to follow the behavior outlined in the Library's "Unattended Children's Policy".

Persons of any age with mental, physical or emotional disabilities, which affect their ability to use the Library or render supervision otherwise necessary, must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver at all times.

Covered drinks are permitted in the Library. Open drinks and food are not permitted (with the exception of the Second Chapter Café) unless specified as part of a Library-related program or approved by the Library Director.

Shirt and shoes must be worn at all times in the Library. Library users are expected to maintain an acceptable standard of personal hygiene which will not offend others.

Compliance:

Library users who are not in compliance with this Library User Behavior Policy may be presented with a copy of the policy and asked to leave the library. Policy violations are subject to review by the Library Director and could result in the temporary or permanent loss of Library privileges. Theft or damage of Library materials is a serious offense and may result in exclusion from the Library and/or in an arrest. The Borough of Whitehall Police Department will be promptly notified of any unlawful activity. Any person who is asked to leave the Library as a result of the violation of this policy and refuses to do so shall be considered to be trespassing, and the Library staff will contact the Whitehall Police Department. Any Library user whose privileges have been denied by the Library may appeal the decision to the Library Board of Trustees within 30 days of the decision.

Library Theft:

The following is part of [Pennsylvania Library Law](#).

**LIBRARY THEFT ACT Act 95 of Session 1982
18 P. S. 3929.1**

House Bill 671

Amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, adding an offense and providing a penalty.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Title 18, act of November 25, 1970 (P. L. 707, Number 230, known as the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, is amended by adding a section to read:

3929.1 Library theft.

(a) Offense defined - A person is guilty of library theft if he willfully conceals on his person or among his belongings any library or museum material while still on the premises of a library or willfully and without authority removes any library or museum material from a library with the intention of converting such material to his own use.

(b) Grading -

(1) Library theft constitutes a:

(i) Summary offense when the offense is a first offense and the value of the material is less than \$150.

(ii) Misdemeanor of the second degree when the offense is a second offense and the value of the material is less than \$150.

(iii) Misdemeanor of the first degree when the offense is a first or second offense and the value of the material is \$150 or more.

(iv) Felony of the third degree when the offense is a third or subsequent offense, regardless of the value of the material.

(2) Amounts involved in library thefts committed pursuant to one scheme or course of conduct, whether from the same library or several libraries, may be aggregated in determining the grade of the offense.

(c) Presumption - A person who willfully conceals any library or museum material on his person or among his belongings while still on the premises of the library or in the immediate vicinity thereof shall be prima facie presume to have concealed the library or museum material with the intention of converting such material to his own use.

(d) Detention - A peace officer, employee or agent of a library who has probably cause to believe that a person has committed library theft may detain such person on the premises of the library or in the immediate vicinity thereof for the following purposes:

(1) To conduct an investigation in a reasonable manner and within a reasonable length of time to determine whether such person has unlawfully concealed or removed any library or museum material.

(2) To inform a peace officer of the detention of the person or surrender that person to the custody of a peace officer.

(e) Exemption from Liability - A peace officer, employee or agent of a library who detains or causes the arrest of any person pursuant to this section shall not be held civilly or criminally liable for false arrest, false imprisonment, unlawful detention, assault, battery, slander, libel or malicious prosecution of the person detained or arrested provided the peace officer, employee or agent of the library had at the time of the detention or arrest probable cause to believe that the person committed library theft.

(f) Public display of law - A copy of this section shall be publicly displayed in the reading rooms and other public rooms of all libraries in such number and manner as will bring this section to the attention of patrons.

(g) Prior offenses - Prior to the commence or trial or entry of plea of a defendant 16 years of age or older accused of the summary offense of library theft, the issuing authority shall notify the Pennsylvania State Police for determination as to whether or not the defendant previously has been convicted of the offense of library theft. The results of such determination shall be forwarded to the police department if the department is the prosecutor, or to the issuing authority if the prosecutor is other than a police officer. The issuing authority shall not proceed with the trial or plea in summary cases until in receipt of the determination made by the State Police. The district justice shall use the information obtained solely for the purpose of grading the offense pursuant to subsection (b).

(h) Fingerprinting - Upon conviction the issuing authority shall order the defendant to submit within five days of such order for fingerprinting by the municipal police of the jurisdiction in which the offense allegedly was committed or the State Police.

(i) Definitions - As used in this section the following words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection:

"Conceal." To conceal library or museum material so that, although there may be some notice of its presence, it is not visible through ordinary observation.

"Library." Any public library, any library, archives or manuscript repository of educational, historical or elementary institution, organization or society, any museum and any repository of public records.

"Library or museum material." Any book, plate, picture, photograph, engraving, painting, drawing, map, newspaper, magazine, pamphlet, broadside, manuscript, document, letter, public record, microfilm, sound recording, audiovisual materials in any format, magnetic or other tapes, electronic data processing records, display object, exhibit, work of art, artifact, or other documentary, written or printed materials regardless of physical form or characteristics, belonging to, on loan to, or otherwise in the custody of a library.

"Premises of a library." Includes but is not limited to the library and all parking areas set aside for the parking of vehicles for the convenience of the patrons of such library.

Section 2. Effective date. This act shall take effect immediately, Approved the 27th day of April, 1982.