

## ***D. Library Borrowing Policies and Procedures***

### ***1. Signing up for a card***

- a. To sign up for a library card, patrons must present:
  - 1) Valid photo ID (such as a driver's license, passport, school ID or state ID)
  - 2) Proof of address (such as a utility bill or lease agreement)
- b. Individuals under the age of 16 must have a parent or guardian present to co-sign for the card and to provide proof of ID and address.
- c. Ages 16 and over are eligible for their own library card with a photo ID and proof of address.
- d. Parents that co-sign for a child under the age of 16 agree to be held financially responsible for the materials checked out under the minor's library card.
- e. Registered library users are responsible for informing the library of any changes in name, address, or telephone number.
- f. Patrons may register online and receive credentials to access online materials. These patrons must present themselves with required ID and receive actual library card before checking out physical items from the library.

### ***2. Obtaining and replacing a library card***

- a. Library cards are only issued to residents, employees, property holders, or students of Somerset County, PA upon presentation of a valid photo ID and proof of Somerset Co. address.
- b. If you are a Pennsylvania resident but do not live or work in Somerset County, you may apply for a free library card by using your home library card with an Access PA sticker.
- c. If you live or work in Pennsylvania, but do not have a home library card, a card will be issued to you at a rate of \$15 per year.
- d. Library cards will not be issued to out-of-state residents, with the exception of residents from Garrett County and Allegany County in Maryland. There is currently no charge for these residents and no home library card needs to be presented. Items checked out to Garrett and Allegany County Maryland residents is limited to two books or audio books and two videos, for a total of four items.
- e. The initial library card is free of charge. If lost, the replacement cost is \$1.00. A valid photo ID must be presented before a card will be replaced.
- f. A library card will not be replaced for users with blocked accounts or overdue books until the account is cleared.
- g. If a library card is lost or stolen, notify the library immediately. Patrons are still responsible for items checked out on their account up until the time the library is notified.

### ***3. Eligibility to borrow (revised 3/2021)***

- a. Individuals presenting valid circulation cards issued by the Meyersdale Public Library or the Somerset County Federated System Library are eligible to borrow materials. In the event that a library card has temporarily been misplaced, a valid photo ID may be accepted. If the card is lost it must be replaced. The following conditions must be met in order to check out library materials:
  - 1) No materials are more than one circulation period overdue and no more than 10 items are overdue.
  - 2) All charges related to lost or damaged books must be paid in full.
  - 3) The library staff may not waive these regulations without the specific permission of a library circulation supervisor, librarian or the library director; however, the patron may request and receive a 24 hour hold on the item(s) he or she wishes to check out to allow the patron to correct the situation which has resulted in loss of eligibility to borrow.

- 4) Cards that have expired must be renewed before using library services. Photo ID and proof of address are required at time of renewal. A one-time exception will be made once patrons are notified of expiration to give them the chance to bring in the proper documentation.

#### ***4. Rules for borrowing***

The Meyersdale Public library's mission is accomplished by providing patrons the fullest access to all library materials. The staff, as the circulation agents for library materials, retains management responsibilities for the entire collection in order to fully address the information needs of individual patrons. The following circulation policies are designed to provide accessibility of the collection to all patrons while meeting the needs of individual patrons.

- a. In order to protect patron privacy, a valid library card or photo ID must be presented to check out, renew materials, pick up or place a hold, and to use the computers.
- b. Only the account holder may check out materials using a library card (for example, a person cannot check books out on a parent, friend, spouse, or sibling's library card). An exception may be made under special circumstances at permission of the library director, however, other than checking out books, no further account details will be provided under any circumstance.
- c. Borrowing restrictions for books and audiobooks are not placed on any patron, including children. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to determine which library materials a minor may borrow.
- d. The only borrowing restriction applies to R-rated videos and DVDs. Borrower must be 18 years of age or older and must present a valid photo ID or other proof of age if asked by library staff. If patron cannot present a photo ID, then the movie will not be checked out to the patron.

#### ***5. Loan periods, fines, renewal, and lost and damaged books (revised 3/2021)***

- a. *General Collection.* The lending period for High Demand books is two weeks. High Demand books may be renewed once. After one renewal, the patron must return the items and wait at least 24 hours to check them out again. The lending period for items other than high-demand books is three weeks. There is a limit of 100 items.
- b. *Reference Books.* Books with classification numbers designated REF (reference) and items in the Pennsylvania Room do not circulate unless the library director gives special permission.
- c. *DVDs.* Five library videos or DVDs per person may be checked out at one time. These videos may be renewed twice. The loan term for high demand DVDs is 1 week; for other DVDs, it is 2 weeks.
- d. *Educational Kits and Electronics:* Educational kits and electronics normally have a checkout period of two weeks, though organizations (schools, homeschool groups, other libraries) may be given longer loan terms. There is a limit of two such items per individual. Patron checkout of electronics may be subject to a signed agreement.
- e. *Renewals.* Items may be renewed online, in person, or by phone. To renew in person, please have your library card present. In special circumstances, library staff will accept a photo ID in place of a library card.
- f. *Auto-Renewal:* Our library has adopted auto-renewal. On the due date, the system will attempt to renew unreturned items. If a renewal is available, the item will renew for another term. If no renewal is available, the item will progress to overdue status. If the patron's file includes a valid email address, notification of the item's status will be sent.
- g. *Special Circumstances:* In special circumstances, such as pandemics when items must be quarantined before check-in, item limits may be raised to allow for items that have been quarantined but not yet checked in. Longer loan terms may apply for items which are not in high demand.
- h. *Overdue and Lost Books:* Meyersdale Public Library no longer charges late fees.
  - 1) This does not mean that patrons may retain borrowed items indefinitely without charge. If a library item is overdue, staff will provide letters, then a "legal letter" and finally a certified legal letter to inform the patron of the overdue materials.

- 2) In addition, if an email address was provided to us, the patron will receive a courtesy notice 3 days before the items are due, 7 days after they are due, and 14 days after they are due.
- 3) When the item is 90 days overdue, it will be marked "Lost", and the patron account will be billed for the cost of the item and a \$12.50 processing fee. Payment plans may be made available with special permission of the library director; however, library services may not be restored until the fine is below the \$10.00 limit. Failure to receive notices does not exempt patrons from the responsibility for payment of library materials or fees. If we are unsuccessful in contacting the patron or a resolution cannot be made, a complaint may be filed with the magistrate.
- 4) No refund will be given to a patron for a "Lost" item later returned for which a patron has paid. Processing fees and third party collection fees are not refundable.
- 5)
  - i. *Damaged Books*. The cost of a damaged item will be assessed at the time the item is turned in.

## **6. Holds**

- a. Patrons in good standing may place up to 10 holds on most items in the library with the exception of reference materials and items in other special collections. Patrons are blocked from renewing an item if there are holds on the title. Expired patrons are not allowed to place holds.
- b. Patrons may reserve materials that are not immediately available for patron use but are in the collection of the Meyersdale Public Library. When the reserved materials are available to the patron who has placed the reserve, the library will notify the patron via email or phone. For privacy reasons, the specific title of the material will not be stated to anyone other than the library patron who placed the reserve. If the patron is not available via the phone, a message will be left. The date of the message will be noted, and the material will be held for the patron for a period of one week. If additional patrons are waiting for the material, the next patron on the list will be called and notified of the availability of the item and the same procedure will be followed. If no additional patrons are waiting for the material, the material will be placed back into general circulation. In most instances the library will not leave more than one message regarding a hold on a specific item. Relay of the message to the appropriate person in the household, and prompt retrieval of the material, are the responsibilities of the patron.
- c. Holds may only be picked up by the individual requesting the hold. If the individual is not able to pick up their hold, their library card can be given to another party to pick up the hold, OR the account holder may come in with a valid library card or photo ID to add individuals to their account for limited access. The hold will then be released to the other party, but no account details or further information will be divulged.

## **7. Interlibrary Loan** (updated 1/15/2019)

“Since no individual library has the resources available to meet all user needs, interlibrary loan is an essential service to assist libraries in obtaining needed material for their users.”

*Pennsylvania Interlibrary Loan Guidelines, section 1.1*

When patrons want material that is not available within the Meyersdale Public Library, we ask other agencies to provide it. This is the process of interlibrary loan. In order to place an interlibrary loan request, a patron must have an active library card with up-to-date contact information. There are two processes for obtaining materials our library does not have.

If the item is owned by a library in the Somerset County Federated Library System, a hold can be placed through our catalog and the item delivered to our library. The process for the patron is then similar to that of borrowing our own materials. The patron is contacted when the item arrives. The item is checked out under our normal loan and renewal terms unless there is a reserve placed on the item by another patron.

If the item is not available in-county, it is requested through our Pennsylvania state Share-It program. This process is governed by Pennsylvania Interlibrary Loan Guidelines found at <https://www.statelibrary.pa.gov/Libraries/LawsRegulations/Pages/Interlibrary-Loan-Guidelines-and-Manual.aspx>

Materials borrowed through Share-It interlibrary loan have a circulation period that is determined by the supplying library, not the Meyersdale Public Library.

Patrons will be contacted when the item is ready for pickup and should be prompt in picking up items. Patrons may request a renewal of the item. All requests for renewals must be made one week prior to the due date. The supplying library may or may not allow renewals. Some have a blanket prohibition on renewals, while some issue renewals on a case-by-case basis, based on demand for the item. Patrons must respect the decision of the supplying library if a renewal is declined.

We are happy to borrow materials from other libraries but ask that the borrower respect the date by which those materials must be returned to their home libraries. When the Meyersdale Public Library is lax in returning materials borrowed through interlibrary loan, the library can lose the privilege of borrowing materials in that way for any of its patrons. It is crucial, therefore, that materials borrowed through interlibrary loan be returned in a timely manner. Habitual failure to do so may result in individual loss of the privilege in order to preserve the privilege for other library patrons.

## **8. Privacy & Confidentiality**

- a. *Policy rationale.* The library's commitment to patrons' privacy and confidentiality is rooted not only in the law but in the ethics and practices of librarianship as defined by the American Library Association and affirmed by the Board of Trustees.
- b. In accordance with the Pennsylvania Library Code, "Records related to the circulation of library materials which contain the names or other personally identifying details regarding users... shall be confidential and shall not be made available to anyone except by a court order in a criminal proceeding." 24 P.S. 4428.
- c. Privacy applies to all ages, not just adults. Parents that co-sign a card for a minor are held financially responsible for the materials checked out on the library card but are not entitled to full access to the account. To access the account, please make sure your child is present, or to renew by phone, the entire library card number must be provided; otherwise, library staff cannot divulge any account details. If unwilling to accept the privacy regulations, parents and guardians may check materials out for their children using their own library card.
- d. Personally identifiable information about library patrons and their use of the library is private. The library shall not disclose such information to anyone except in the following cases:
  - 1) If required by law, pursuant to a valid subpoena, warrant, court order or other investigatory document; or
  - 2) By written consent of the patron.
  - 3) All requests for information must be addressed to the Director, who shall consult with the Trustees and legal counsel when appropriate.
- e. Patrons who use library services requiring personally identifiable information are entitled to view their own records.
- f. Patrons who fail to return materials in a timely manner will be deemed to have waived their right to confidentiality insofar as is necessary for the library to retrieve the missing material or secure appropriate compensation for its loss.
- g. The library will make a good-faith effort to notify patrons of any changes in the law or policies pertaining to library use that may affect patrons' privacy or intellectual freedom.

- h. Patrons who have questions, concerns, or complaints about the library's handling of their privacy and confidentiality rights should file written comments with the Director. All such comments will be investigated and responded to when appropriate.
- i. The possibility of surveillance, whether direct or through access to records of speech, research and exploration, undermines a democratic society. Therefore, the Library will not share data on any individual with third parties unless required by law or directed by that patron.
- j. Patrons should be aware that the USA PATRIOT Act and other recently enacted laws, regulations, and guidelines increase the likelihood that their activities, including their use of computers to browse the Web or access e-mail, may be under government surveillance without their knowledge or consent. Under the Act, the FBI may obtain access to all personally identifiable information, including books and other materials checked out; searches done on Library computers, including places visited on the Internet; books and other materials borrowed through interlibrary loan; when and where patrons have signed up to use library computers, study rooms, and the like; and notes taken by librarians when helping patrons with questions. The Act also prohibits library personnel from notifying a patron under suspicion, the press, or anyone else that an investigation is underway.
- k. *Information Needed for Core Services.* The library avoids creating unnecessary records and retaining records unnecessary to the fulfillment of its mission. It does not engage in practices that might place private information on public view. It must, however, gather and retain certain information about current patrons in order to provide services, including information pertaining to registration, circulation, and electronic access. (Examples of such information would include name, e-mail address, library card barcode, phone number or home address.) All personally identifiable information is kept confidential and will not be sold, licensed or disclosed under any circumstances except those enumerated in this privacy policy.
- l. *Records of Use.* Links between patron records and materials borrowed are deleted when items are returned, and other records are deleted as soon as the original purpose for data collection has been satisfied. In-house access to information in all formats is available without creating a data trail. The library has invested in appropriate technology to protect the security of any personally identifiable information while it is in the library's custody, and aggregate, summary data is stripped of personally identifiable information.
- m. *Internet Use.* When connecting to licensed databases outside the library, patrons are identified only as members of the library community. Nevertheless, users of networked computers will sometimes need to enable "cookies" in order to access a number of resources available through the library. (A cookie is a small file sent to the browser by a Web site each time that site is visited.) Library servers use cookies solely to verify that a person is an authorized user in order to allow access to licensed library resources and to customize Web pages to that user's specification. Cookies sent by library servers disappear when the user's computer browser is closed, and the library does not share cookies information with third parties.
- n. *Staff Access to Personal Data.* Only authorized library staff members may access personal data stored in the library's computer system for the purpose of performing library work.

### **9. Hours of operation**

The Meyersdale Public Library maintains consistent, posted hours of service during which services of the Meyersdale Public Library are available to patrons. Those hours are:

- Monday: 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday: 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Thursday: 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Friday: 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday: Closed

The book drop is available for the return of most material during the hours the library is closed. The book drop is located by the front door of the library. Due to the public nature of the drop box the library cannot guarantee that materials deposited there will be checked in. It is the responsibility of the patron to secure a check in receipt for proof of return.

***10. Further Considerations***

Circulation policies and procedures may be revised or adjusted as needed at the discretion of the Library Director. Local policies exist concurrently with Evergreen policies; please also refer to Evergreen circulation and cataloging policies as needed.