



YOUR ROAD TO DISCOVERY, ENRICHMENT, & COMMUNITY

# Essex Free Library Policies



# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## **Mission Statement**

Your road to discovery, enrichment, and community.

## **Hours of Service:**

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 9-5

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-8

Saturdays 9-2

## **Library Board Chair:**

Janet Watts

## **Library Director:**

Caitlin Corless

## **Contact:**

(802) 879-0313

[essexfreelibrary@essex.org](mailto:essexfreelibrary@essex.org)

Approved: 11/17/2021



## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement**

The Essex Free Library is open to all. The Library welcomes and embraces a diversity of viewpoints, ideas, cultures, and backgrounds through providing a wide range of resources, programs, events, and other community services.

The Library is committed to supporting and serving all members of the community regardless of race, socioeconomic status, culture, age, sex, gender identity, and disability. The Library provides an inclusive environment through our staff, library collection, and services, and offers a safe community space where people of all backgrounds can come together and express ideas, opinions, and thoughts.

Approved: 05/17/2023



# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## **Who May Use the Library**

The Essex Free Library is committed to serving the Essex, Vermont community and beyond through offering resources and services both within and outside of the library building.

1. We invite community members and beyond to visit the library, attend library programs, use computers, and browse the collection. All are welcome.
2. Residents of the Town of Essex, which includes the Village of Essex Junction, are eligible to apply for Homecards from the Essex Free Library at no cost. A resident must verify their Essex address to become a permanent, unlimited Essex Free Library patron. Proof of residence documents may include IDs, drivers' licenses, postmarked mail, bills, etc.
3. The Essex Free Library is part of the Homecard Library System, a cooperative lending program of libraries in Northwestern Vermont. Homecard holders with unrestricted accounts may check out items from the Essex Free Library and all libraries in the Homecard system.
4. Essex Free Library patrons have access to Essex Free Library's digital resources collection.
5. Individuals who are unable to provide proof of residence may be issued a temporary library account. Temporary patrons may check out up to three items from the Essex Free Library.
6. Patrons under the age of 16 must be linked to an Essex Free Library adult patron who claims responsibility for any lost or damaged items. Children must be five or older to be issued a card.

Date Approved: 01/19/2022



# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## **Circulation Policy**

To make materials available to all patrons on an equal basis, the Essex Free Library sets limits on loan periods and on the number of renewals allowed.

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1. Library materials will circulate for three weeks with some select materials having shorter or longer checkout periods. Most materials may be renewed up to three times unless a hold has been placed on an item.
2. Extended loan periods may be available upon request at the time of checkout.
3. Patrons may borrow up to three interlibrary loan materials at a time.
4. Library materials that are overdue are not subject to a late fee, but patrons will be charged for lost or damaged items.

Date Approved: 01/19/2022



# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## **Patron Responsibilities Policy**

To make materials available to all patrons on an equal basis and to protect circulating library property, the Essex Free Library requires patrons to accept responsibility for the care and return of their items.

1. Library patrons assume responsibility for all items checked out on their card until the library has been notified that the card has been lost. The replacement cost for lost cards is \$0.50.
2. Guardians are responsible for items checked out on their child's account.
3. Patrons with overdue items will be notified using the contact information they have provided to the library. If an item is eight weeks or more overdue, their account will be restricted until the item is returned, replaced, or paid for.
4. At the discretion of the library director, access to the library may be denied for repeated failure to return materials, refusal to replace or reimburse damaged or lost items, or failure to comply with the library's behavior policy.
5. In the event the replacement cost of overdue items exceeds \$100, the library director, at their discretion, may turn the account over to the Essex Police Department for their assistance in recovery of Town property in accordance with Vermont State Statutes.

Date Approved: 01/19/2022



# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## **Patron Code of Behavior**

The Essex Free Library staff is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and safe atmosphere for all who use our services. To do so, we ask patrons to abide by the following code of conduct:

1. Please respect all who use the library services.
2. Disruptive or threatening behavior and the use of offensive language are not permitted.
3. Please respect library property. All library items and property should be treated with care.
4. We ask that children aged 8 and under be accompanied by a responsible adult.
5. Clothes and shoes must be worn inside the library at all times.
6. Patrons are requested to limit all cell phone conversations and to avoid areas where other patrons are reading or studying.
7. Electronic devices with sound may be used at a volume that does not disturb others.
8. Unless authorized by the Library Director or Library Board of Trustees, political soliciting or conducting private for-profit business is not permitted.
9. The smoking of legal or illegal substances, including vaping and smoking e-cigarettes, is prohibited both within and outside the building.
10. Service animals are welcome, but pets and other animals are not permitted except for approved library programs.
11. Food and beverage should not come in contact with library materials, furniture, or computers.
12. No weapons are permitted in the library.

Essex Free Library is committed to abiding by federal, state, and local laws and ordinances.

Date Approved: 09/18/2019



# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## **Materials Selection Policy**

The Essex Free Library supports its mission by curating and maintaining resources that serve the diverse informational, recreational, and educational interests and needs of the community. The Library strives to acquire materials in various formats for all ages which reflect and enhance the full diversity of viewpoints.

The Library supports and adheres to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement. These serve as the basis for both the selection and lending policies of the Library. The Library defends the right of the individual to access information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to some patrons.

The reading and viewing activity of children is ultimately the responsibility of their parents or guardians. The Essex Free Library does not impose on that relationship.

The Library Staff is responsible for the selection of library materials, both physical and digital, with the Library Director being ultimately responsible. The Library provides materials that are of current interest and permanent value, that are up-to-date and responsive to the interests and needs of the community. The Staff provides a diversity of materials without exercising either direct or implied censorship. The Director shall be responsible for expending available funds in an equitable manner so that collections remain viable and current.

Materials selection will result from a variety of professional activities on the part of the Library Staff. Reviews of new materials from professional journals and popular reviewing media form an important tool in the selection process for both the adult and children's collections.

Recommendations from the staff and the public are always welcome and evaluated within the framework of the budget and acquisition process.



## **Selection Criteria:**

### **A. General**

All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the standards listed below. However, an item need not meet all of the criteria to be acceptable. Materials are evaluated on the significance of the entire work rather than individual parts. The following principals guide the selection:

1. Community interests and needs
2. Contemporary significance or local significance of author or subject
3. Availability of material at nearby libraries and through Interlibrary Loan
4. Format and ease of use
5. Attention of critics, reviewers, media and public
6. Relation to existing collection on the topic
7. Reputation and/or authority of the author, editor or illustrator
8. Literary merit
9. Price, availability and budgetary allowances
10. Physical limitations of the library building
11. Date of publication

### **B. Donation Guidelines**

Gifts of books and other items will be accepted on the condition that the Staff has the authority to make decisions in the best interest of the Library's total collection. Content guidelines will be identical to those mentioned above with condition being paramount in determining the eventual outcome. Some items may be added to the collection, many will benefit the Library by being included in the annual Book Sale, and those in poor condition will be recycled. Donated materials cannot be returned to the donor if they are not selected for the Library's collection.

### **C. Collection Maintenance**

To assure a vital, attractive and effective total collection, the staff will systematically remove materials that are no longer viable. The Library does not automatically replace materials withdrawn because of loss, damage or wear. Need for replacement is weighed with regard to several factors: duplicate copies available, adequately covered field, more current authoritative materials as well as decline in demand for a particular subject or author's work.

#### **D. Reconsideration**

Patrons questioning if specific materials should be included in the collection may complete the "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form. The inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Essex Free Library Board of Trustees. Their decision will be based upon this selection policy, the response of the Library Director and the patron's inquiry. The Library recognizes that some materials may be controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection or retention of materials will never be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval of any group of patrons, but solely on the basis of the principles stated in this policy. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered, except to protect it from theft or further deterioration in the case of fragile historic documents.

Date Approved: 01/17/2024



# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources

The Trustees of the Essex Free Library have delegated the responsibility for the selection and evaluation of library resources to the Library Staff. A library resource is defined as a library item, program, or service. The Trustees have established reconsideration procedures to address any concerns that may arise. Completion of this form is the first step in these procedures. If you wish to request reconsideration of a library resource, please return the completed form to the Library Director, Essex Free Library, 1 Browns River Road, Essex, VT 05452.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you represent yourself? \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Address: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Library resource(s) on which you're commenting:

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Format: Book \_\_\_\_\_ DVD \_\_\_\_\_ Audio Recording \_\_\_\_\_

Library Program \_\_\_\_\_ Periodical/Newspaper \_\_\_\_\_

3. What brought this resource to your attention?

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4. Have you examined the entire resource? If a program, did you attend the program in its entirety?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5. What concerns you about this resource?

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6. Are there resource(s) you can suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

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# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## **Display Policy**

The Essex Free Library offers displays and exhibits to highlight the library's collection, its resources and services, and a variety of community interests. These displays are curated by both the library staff and the general public.

### **A. Staff Displays**

Library displays are planned and implemented by library staff. When creating displays, staff members take into account the following:

- Community interests and needs
- Available space
- Connections to community or national events and programs
- Connection to library resources, programs, and collections

The library may also partner with other community organizations, educational institutions, and individuals when developing and implementing displays.

The library will strive to provide displays and exhibits that offer diverse viewpoints and appeal to patrons of various ages and interests.

### **B. Community Member Displays**

The library provides a display case for local organizations and individuals' displays and collections.

1. Exhibits and displays should be of educational, cultural, or community interest, and must be in accordance with the library's mission.
2. Content of the display must be appropriate for all age groups.
3. No weapons of any kind will be put on display.
4. To showcase a display or collection, individuals or organizations must submit a Library Display Case Reservation Application (see attached).
5. Acceptance of a display does not constitute an endorsement by the Essex Free Library staff, the Library Board of Trustees, or the Town of Essex.
6. The library assumes no responsibility in the event of theft, loss, or damage to the displayed items.

7. Individuals and organizations are responsible for setting up and taking down their displays.
8. Collections will be put on display for 30 days or another agreed upon time length.
9. At the discretion of the library director, a display may be rejected if it does not meet the library's mission or meet the above requirements.
10. Any individual or group that is rejected on these grounds may refer the matter to the Library Board of Trustees for reconsideration.

Date Approved: 01/25/2023



# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## **Community Board**

In keeping with the Essex Free Library's efforts to continually provide information to the public, the library offers a community bulletin board and display area in the library's lobby for postings and brochures of town and community events, services, and notices.

1. Posted and distributed documents must be of an informational, educational, cultural, and recreational nature.
2. Postings must be approved by library staff.
3. All postings will be removed after the date of the service or program has passed.
4. The community board and lobby display area is not to be used for commercial or for-profit purposes.
5. The library does not permit the posting of for-profit services, solicitations, or personal advertisements. Exceptions may be made for educational opportunities offered by for-profit institutions.
6. Political materials must be non-partisan and solely informational.
7. The content of postings, flyers, and brochures must be appropriate for all ages.
8. Postings and distribution materials will be permitted on an equitable basis, regardless of the viewpoints, beliefs, or affiliations of the organization, and as space allows.
9. Permitting the posting or distribution of a notice or flyer does not constitute an endorsement from the Essex Free Library staff, the Library Board of Trustees, or the Town of Essex.
10. Documents that do not meet the required guidelines may be removed by library staff.



# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## Library Display Case Reservation Application

### Organization/Applicant Information

Name of Organization (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe your display:

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I have read the Display policy and understand that the library assumes no responsibility in the event of theft, loss, or damage to the displayed items.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature





# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## **Library Programs Policy**

The Essex Free Library supports its mission by developing and offering free enriching, educational, recreational, and diverse programs and events to all members of the public. Through its programs, the Library aims to connect community members with a variety of ideas, opportunities, and viewpoints.

The purpose of Library programming is to:

- Encourage the use of the Library and its resources
- Promote early literacy and inspire a lifelong love of reading and learning
- Highlight information on current issues and interests
- Strengthen cultural awareness, diversity, and equitability
- Encourage civic engagement and discourse
- Share local talent and knowledge

Library programs are organized and scheduled by the Library staff and take place at the Library and at other locations throughout the community. In developing Library programs, the Library staff takes the following criteria into account:

- Relevancy to the Library's mission
- Community interest, needs, and requests
- Cost of program
- Space
- Staff Time
- Qualifications of Presenter or Facilitator

Final programming decisions are made by the Library Director.

All Essex Free Library programs are free with the exception of fundraisers that benefit the Library. Performers, authors, and presenters may also sell books or recordings as part of Library programs. Library programs are open to the public with the exception of outreach programs at schools or other sites that are closed to the general public.

The Library offers its programs to all members of the community regardless of race, socioeconomic status, culture, age, sex, gender identity, religion, and disability. Efforts will be made to accommodate all who wish to attend a Library program.

The Library offers a variety of programs for all ages, with some programs intended for specific ages. Program descriptions will note age-specific programs. Some programs may require registration due to space and supply limitations.

The Essex Free Library welcomes program suggestions, requests, and proposals. To make a recommendation for a program or to submit a proposal, individuals may contact the Library Staff.

The Essex Free Library is under no obligation to present multiple viewpoints within any one program. The Library does welcome opportunities for other viewpoints to be presented in separate programs. Presentation of a program does not mean that the Library endorses the content and viewpoints of programs and presenters.

The Library welcomes feedback of programs. Patrons with concerns about a program are welcome to fill out the “Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources” form.

The Essex Free Library forms partnerships throughout the community and seeks out collaborations with other organizations and educational institutes that further the mission of the Library. The Library offers outreach Library programs to make the Library more accessible to the community, to reach more community members, to encourage equity of access to library resources and services, and to promote the Library. Outreach brings awareness of the many opportunities and resources the Library provides. As staffing allows, the Essex Free Library visits schools, daycares, and senior living facilities, and participates in Town and community events.

Approved: 11/15/2023



# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## **Child Safety Policy**

The Essex Free Library aims to provide children with resources and programs to help build literary, creativity, and to promote a love of exploration and learning.

The library selects diverse, quality materials that will challenge, interest, and inform children. It offers enriching programs for children of all ages throughout the year.

Parents are responsible for the types of materials and selection choices checked out by their children. The library staff does not limit or censor materials for any patron.

The library staff is committed to offering a welcoming environment during each library visit; however, no public place, including the library, can guarantee the safety of children. Parents, guardians, and caregivers are solely responsible for the safety, supervision, and behavior of their children in the library. An adult must accompany children under the age of 10 at all times when visiting the library.

If an unaccompanied child of any age is determined by the staff to be disruptive, in danger, or in distress every effort should be made to locate a parent, guardian, or caretaker. Arrangements should be made for the child to be picked up immediately. If the parent fails to pick up the child in a timely fashion, the Essex Police will be notified so that the child can be safely cared for.

If a child is left unattended after the library is closed, the child should contact his parent, guardian, or caregiver to make immediate arrangements for a safe ride home. Two staff will wait with the child at the front of the building for 20 minutes. If no ride appears within that time, the Essex Police will be notified to safely care for the child until the adult can be located.

Children 12 and over are considered to be mature enough to make pick up plans and are capable of waiting unaccompanied outside until their ride arrives.

Date Approved: 2017



# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## **Internet and Electronic Device Policy**

The Essex Free Library is pleased to provide access to information resources to library patrons through the Internet. This Library is a forum for all points of view and adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom as expressed in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights.

Internet communications shall be considered private, and confidentiality will be encouraged within the limits of the shared space of the library's public environment, the technology of the equipment, and the requirements of law. Users must comply with U.S. copyright law, all other applicable state and federal laws governing information access, and the following:

- A. Guidelines and courtesies specific to this library
  - a. No food or liquids are permitted in the computer areas.
  - b. Staff will not monitor children's use
  - c. Printing charges are 10 cents/page for black and white, 25 cents/page for color. Please pay at the desk before you leave the building.
  - d. Each internet workstation accommodates one patron. Please do not occupy more than one chair.
- B. User Responsibilities
  - a. Because the workstations are located in areas shared by library users of all ages, backgrounds, and sensibilities, the library asks patrons to consider others when accessing potentially controversial information or images. The library reserves the right to ask users to discontinue the display of information and/or images that contain any inappropriate visual images or text. This may include material that you do not find personally offensive.
  - b. Staff is available to provide log-on assistance, but patrons requiring extended help are encouraged to take advantage of Internet materials, which circulate from the library collection or schedule a tutoring session with the Youth Services librarian.
  - c. Users must respect the library's computers and utilize only those programs and services for which they are intended.
  - d. Patrons using any electronic devices through the library's wireless network must agree to the Conditions of Use policy upon accessing.
- C. Privacy Ethics

- a. Looking over the shoulders at other patron's Internet activity is impolite and will be mentioned to any offender when observed by a staff person.
  - b. Using the Internet history to review sites visited by other patrons is similarly unprincipled and rude.
  - c. Changing any setting without staff knowledge is not allowed.
- D. Children and the Internet
  - a. There are no filtering devices on the library's Internet workstations.
  - b. Parents or guardians, NOT the library or its staff, are responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their minor children.
- E. Disclaimer
  - a. When using the Internet, please remember that some material may be outdated, incorrect or biased. Please critically evaluate all information you find. The Library does not vouch for the accuracy, completeness or timeliness of information obtained through the Internet.



# ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

## **Patron Confidentiality Policy**

The Essex Free Library adheres to the American Library Association Code of Ethics, which includes the following statement: “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.” The Essex Free Library staff is committed to the protection and confidentiality of patron records. No staff member shall, at any time, disclose any personally identifiable patron or library user records including, but not limited to circulation records, patron registration records, patron email, phone number, address, computer records, interlibrary loan requests, or reference requests, to any person other than the patron themselves unless:

1. The patron has given informed consent for another individual to obtain that information.

Or

2. An authorized Essex Free Library staff person or Essex Town Police person requires that information for retrieval of overdue library materials or compensation for damaged or lost library materials.

Or

3. An agency of the state, federal, or local government makes the request while in possession of a court order or subpoena as may be authorized pursuant to federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigatory power. In such case, before acting on this request, staff must notify a member of the Library Board of Trustees who will, in turn, consult with Town of Essex legal counsel before complying.

Approved: 06/2008