

**POLICY STATEMENT FOR SHELDON MUNICIPAL LIBRARY  
SHELDON, VT**

(Originally adopted .....)

**1. MISSION STATEMENT**

Sheldon Municipal Library is a center of community interaction, involvement, and information, welcoming people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to connect with each other, to satisfy their thirst for knowledge, reading, learning, and entertainment, and to foster civic participation.

**2. LIBRARY PRIVILEGES**

A) Who may use the library: As a public library, Sheldon Municipal Library makes many of its resources available to everyone. These resources include: use of the wired and wireless computer networks, subject to the Library's Acceptable Use Policy; use of library materials (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers, etc.), while in the Library; access to databases and services for which the Library pays a subscription fee, while in the Library; programs and events; and reference service.

All Vermont residents and long-term visitors may register for full library privileges, which include borrowing library materials, interlibrary-loan service, and remote access to subscription databases and services.

By applying for a library membership, the borrower agrees to abide by all of the Library's rules and policies.

B) Borrowing terms: Library materials are purchased with funds provided by the generosity of library donors, grant funds, and property tax monies allocated by the towns of Sheldon. Each item in the library collection represents an investment in acquisition, processing, cataloging, and staff and volunteer time. The Board of Trustees and the Library Director are charged with the responsibility of ensuring the availability of materials for the use of the community. Therefore, the borrower is responsible for all materials borrowed from the Library, and agrees to return them in good condition and by the date they are due. Library materials are lent for three weeks, with the following exceptions: park and museum passes circulate for three open library days; interlibrary loans circulate for a period determined by the lending library. Patrons may renew items unless a reserve has been placed by another patron and at the discretion of library staff. Renewals and reserves may be made in person, by telephone, via email, or at the Library's website (login and password required).

C) Interlibrary loan: The Library recognizes that we cannot purchase every item desired by every patron, and therefore participates in the Vermont Department of Library's interlibrary loan system. Patrons may request interlibrary items provided that they have a current library membership and are in good standing. Patrons must return or pay for any overdue interlibrary loan items before borrowing any library materials, whether from the Library or through interlibrary loan. If a patron has

been habitually late in returning library materials, s/he may be restricted to borrowing one interlibrary loan item at a time, or restricted from requesting interlibrary items for a time period to be determined by the Director. If a patron habitually requests interlibrary loan items but does not pick them up, s/he may be restricted from requesting interlibrary items for a time period to be determined by the Director.

Interlibrary loan from libraries within Vermont is a free service, although we gladly accept donations to help pay for the cost of mailing items back to their home library. Some items are not available in-state, in which case a patron may choose to ask that the item be borrowed from out-of-state. The patron agrees to pay for any costs charged by an out-of-state library.

Interlibrary loan materials have a due date set by the lending library, and might be renewed at the discretion of the lending library. Should a patron wish to renew an item, s/he must contact Sheldon Municipal Library one week in advance of the due date, to give library staff time to try to accommodate the renewal request.

D) **Overdue items:** The Library does not charge fines for overdue materials, although a "conscience box" can be found at the circulation desk for those who wish to assuage their remorse over returning materials late. The Library uses a variety of means to contact patrons when items become overdue. These are courtesy notifications only, and do not replace the patron's responsibility to return items on time. The Library prefers to avoid barring patrons from borrowing materials; however, once a patron has item/s 8 weeks overdue, his/her borrowing privileges may be suspended until overdue materials are returned or paid for.

E) **Lost and damaged items:** When a patron fails to return library materials, or returns items with damage beyond normal wear and tear, s/he may be charged an amount equivalent to the cover price/s or, for items for which no cover price is noted, at a standard price appropriate to the format.

The Library always prefers to regain lost materials, and will refund payment for lost items returned in good condition, if the item has not already been replaced by the Library.

Once paid for, damaged items become the property of the patron, unless the item has been disposed of because it posed a threat to the Library's collection (e.g., items returned wet).

### 3. HOURS OF OPERATION

The Library shall be open 22 hours per week, including some evening hours, with the schedule arranged to allow maximum public use. The library will be closed for holidays as determined by the library trustees. Hours of operation may be changed at the discretion of library staff for any matters that affect the safe and effective operation of, or accessibility to, the Library. Efforts will be made wherever possible to notify the public in advance of any such closures through postings at the Library and in public media where appropriate.

### 4. GOVERNANCE

The Library is governed by a Board of five trustees, each of whom serves five years. One trustee is elected each year at the annual Town Meeting.

The Sheldon Municipal Library Board of Trustees meets bi-monthly unless otherwise warranted. The public is encouraged to submit comments or questions for consideration by the Library trustees at their regular meeting. Any person wishing to speak at a Library trustee meeting may do so during the period for public comment; or by prior arrangement made by speaking with the library staff during normal hours of operation, they may ask to be added to agenda. In keeping with Vermont's Open Meeting Law, the bi-monthly meeting of the Library trustees shall be warned in advance by a conspicuous posting at the Library and in area Post Offices .

### 5. CODE OF CONDUCT

As a center of community interaction, involvement, and information, Sheldon Municipal Library welcomes everyone. The Library's overarching philosophy is that no person has the right to interfere with any other person's right to use the Library. In order to ensure that all library users are able to enjoy the Library, visitors are asked to observe the following guidelines.

- A) Service animals are welcome in the Library, but no pets are permitted.
- B) Appropriate dress is required.
- C) The public is expected to respect all library property, books, and equipment as well as other patrons and staff.
- D) Anyone who damages library property will be held financially responsible.
- E) Anyone behaving inappropriately (including, but not limited to running, throwing objects, loud or abusive talking, fighting, or any other activities which disrupt the Library or create an unsafe environment for staff and other patrons) may be required to leave the Library for the remainder of the day.
- F) Repeated infractions may result in being banned from the Library for a longer period, or permanently. In order to be readmitted to the Library, the offender may be required to sign a contract of behavior, meet with Library staff or appear before the Trustees, and/or make restitution. If a child is banned from the Library, staff may, at their discretion, choose to contact his/her parent or guardian.

- G) Library staff reserves the right to inspect all bags and packages.
- H) No solicitation will be allowed.

## 6. USE OF BULLETIN BOARDS

The Library provides bulletin boards in order to fulfill its mission to provide patrons with access to information. Use of bulletin boards does not imply endorsement by the staff or trustees of the library. The following guidelines will be followed in order to assure equal access to groups wishing to post announcements.

The library reserves the right to limit the size, number of items, scheduling, and frequency with which an individual or group may have a display or exhibit.

## 8. CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

In accordance with the American Library Association's Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records and Vermont Act 129 (Sec 1.22 VSA chapter 4), Sheldon Municipal Library does not identify the names of library users with any specific material. Our relationship with our users is strictly confidential in nature. The Library will not make any information available to any individual or to any agency of the government, whether state, federal or local, unless compelled to do so under due process of law. We will resist such encroachment on the Library's powers until a ruling has been made in a court of competent jurisdiction. This policy of confidentiality applies to materials owned or borrowed by the Library for patrons' use, to patrons' use of the Internet, and to any services rendered by the Library.

Under applicable Vermont state law, the library's officers, employees, and volunteers shall

not disclose the records except

- A) with the written permission of the library patron to whom the records pertain
- B) to officers, employees, volunteers, and agents of the library to the extent necessary for library administration purposes
- C) in response to an authorized judicial order or warrant directing disclosure
- D) to custodial parents or guardians of patrons under age 16
- E) To satisfy library administrative and other reporting requirements, when used as aggregated statistical information pertaining to the patronage, circulation activities, and use of any service or consultation the library offers, provided that they do not contain the names of patrons or any other personally identifying information.

## 9. COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

The goal of the Library is to build and maintain a balanced collection that serves the needs of the community in print, electronic, and web-based formats, and all other emerging media as appropriate.

- A) Materials selection shall be guided by the principles set forth in
- The Library Bill of Rights, prepared by the Council of the American Library Association (attachment A);
  - The Freedom to Read Statement by the ALA Council (attachment B);
  - The Freedom to View, a statement by the Educational Film Library Association, endorsed by ALA (attachment C).

B) Responsibility for selection: Book and/or library material selection and deselection are and shall be vested in the Library Director and, under his/her direction, those members of the professional staff who are qualified by reason of education or training. Ultimate responsibility for book selection and deselection rests with the Library Board of Trustees. C) Criteria: In selecting or deselecting materials the Director uses his/her professional judgment and expertise, enhanced by an understanding of the community's needs, from pre-school through adult. Authoritative professional reviews, standard lists of basic works, and recommendations from professional journals will be used for the selection process. The public may make recommendations that will receive careful consideration. Systematic deselection will be guided by accepted professional practices. Race, nationality, or the political or social views of the author shall not be a determining factor in book selection or deselection.

D) Interlibrary loan: Materials exist in and are available from other library collections which library staff will borrow, if beyond the scope of our collection, through the interlibrary loan system of Vermont.

E) Restrictions: The Board believes that reading is a purely individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to reject for him/herself books of which he/she does not approve, no one may censor or restrict the freedom of choice of others.

F) Sheldon Municipal Library will not restrict access to library materials and services for minors, and holds that only parents have the right to restrict their children from access to library materials and services. Parents who prefer that their children do not have access to certain materials shall so advise their children. The Library and its staff are responsible for providing equal access to library materials and services to all library users.

According to Article 5 of the Library Bill of Rights, young people are entitled to the same access to libraries and to the materials in libraries as are adults. Accordingly, access to library materials for youth will not be restricted in any way by Library staff.

### G) Gifts

1. Books, memorial gifts, and other materials may be accepted on the condition that the Library Director has the authority to make whatever disposition he/she deems

in the best interest of the Library, based on the selection and de-selection criteria above.

2. The Library will not accept for deposit materials that are not outright gifts. Materials loaned for display are excluded from this policy.

H) Procedure for Review of Selection(s): If a complaint is made regarding part of the Library's collection, the procedure is as follows:

1. The complaint is recorded by the Library Director or a staff member on the "Request for Reconsideration of Material" form and filed.
2. If the material satisfies library selection criteria, the complainant is invited to file the objection in writing. A "Book Selection Inquiry" will be sent to the complainant, or he/she may come to the Library to discuss the complaint in an interview. In the latter case, the Book Selection Inquiry form will be used to record the nature of the objection.
3. The material is temporarily removed from circulation, pending the return of the Book Selection Inquiry form within one week. If the form is not returned within one week, the book is returned to circulation.
4. If the Book Selection Inquiry form is filed, the Chair of the Library Board is notified. The Chair will appoint a media committee consisting of the Library Director, a member of the Board of Trustees, and a member of the Sheldon community.
5. The media committee will, within three weeks of the original complaint
  - a) Read and examine the challenged material.
  - b) Check general acceptance of the material by reading reviews.
  - c) Weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the material as a whole, and not on passages pulled out of context.
  - d) Meet to discuss the material and to prepare a report and recommendation.
  - e) Present the report to the Board at its next scheduled meeting. The Board makes a final decision and informs the complainant of the decision and the reasoning behind it.
6. The material is returned to circulation, withdrawn from the collection, or labeled for special handling as determined by the Board. The final report is filed with the Library Director.

## 10. INTERNET AND PUBLIC WIRELESS ACCESS POLICY

As part of its mission to provide a wide range of information resources to its users, Sheldon Municipal Library provides computers with unrestricted access to the Internet, including through its public wireless network.

The Library subscribes to and supports the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and the associated interpretation, Access to Digital Information, Services, and Networks.

A) The Internet, an essential medium for obtaining and transmitting valuable information of all types, is unregulated and offers access to information that is inaccurate, biased, illegal, or that may be offensive or disturbing to some users. The Library does not monitor an individual's use of the Internet; nor does the Library employ filtering software.

B) The Library strives to provide citizens with access to information of the highest quality; however, the Library specifically disclaims any warrant as to the accuracy, timeliness, authoritativeness, or usefulness of content located via the Internet.

The Library will have no liability for direct, indirect, or consequential damages related to the use of information accessed through the Library's Internet service.

### C) Responsibilities of Library Staff

1. Library staff will not monitor a user's Internet use, except for time limits in order to ensure equal opportunity of access for everyone. The user, or the parent/guardian of a minor, is responsible for his or her Internet activity at all times.

2. The Library reserves the right to terminate an Internet session that disrupts library services or in the event that a user violates Library policy.

3. The Library affirms the right and responsibility of parents/guardians, not the Library, to determine and monitor their minor children's use of the Internet. Parents who believe that their children cannot responsibly use the Library's Internet access are requested to monitor their children's Internet use.

### D) Responsibilities of Users

Use of the Library's computers, Internet access, or wireless service is subject to the Library's Code of Conduct, as well as the following requirements:

1. Internet use is not limited unless another patron is waiting to use the internet.

2. Internet computers may, by mutual agreement, be shared by two or more patrons.

3. No food and only water is permitted near or while using the computers.

5. Because the Internet computers are in a public space, users will respect others' privacy, and will refrain from attempting to view, read, or censor material being used by others. Likewise, users are responsible for demonstrating judgment, respect for others, and appropriate conduct while using Library resources. For instance, the viewing of some materials, while legal, infringes on the function of the Library as an institution. Users are reminded that the Library is a public, not a private, place.

6. Users may not install, download, or modify software.

7. Upon completing an Internet session, the patron will exit out of the Internet browser.

E) Examples of inappropriate use of library computers include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Violation of computer system integrity;
2. Unauthorized tampering with computer hardware or software;
3. Storage of data to anything other than a personal storage device;
4. Violation of software license agreements or copyright laws;
5. Compromising the safety and security of others or the property of others;
6. Accessing materials that are illegal under local, state, or federal law;
7. Attempting to gain unauthorized access to restricted files or networks.

Illegal acts involving Library computing resources may also be subject to prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities.

F) Response to Violations: Failure to comply with this policy and related library procedures may result in the suspension of access to library computers or to Internet service in the Library.

G) Wireless Internet Access: This service is free of charge and subject to the terms of the Library's Internet Use Policy and terms and conditions of use as follows:

1. Wireless access is provided as a public service free of charge on an as-is basis with no guarantee and no warranty. The Library's wireless network is subject to periodic maintenance and unforeseen downtime.
2. There are risks involved with connecting to a public wireless connection, such as possible viruses, malware, loss of data, possible hacking/snooping by others connected, and possible hardware/software failure. It is the user's responsibility to protect his/her information from all risks associated with using the Internet, including any damage, loss, or theft that may occur as a result of using the Library's wireless access.
3. All library Wi-Fi users should have up-to-date antivirus software installed on their computers/devices.
4. The laptop computer/device owner is responsible for setting up his/her own equipment to access the Library's wireless network. Library staff is not permitted to handle patron laptops, devices or peripheral equipment. Library staff is not permitted to configure patrons' laptops/devices; nor can the Library provide more than general assistance in getting connected to the wireless network.
5. The Library assumes no responsibility for the safety of equipment; users must keep their equipment with them at all times.
6. In using this free Internet access, users agree and hereby release, indemnify, and hold harmless, Sheldon Municipal Library, its officers and employees, and any affiliate, from any damage that may result from a patron's use of the Library's wireless access. While using this wireless access, users acknowledge that they are subject to, and agree to abide by all laws, and all rules and regulations of the Town of Sheldon, the State of Vermont, and the federal government that are applicable to Internet use.
7. At its sole discretion, Sheldon Municipal Library may terminate this public service at any time without prior notice.
8. Printing is available via the wireless connection at this time.



9. Any attempt to circumvent library procedures or any unauthorized attempt to access or manipulate library equipment may result in suspension of use of the Library's Wi-Fi network.

## 11. EMPLOYMENT

Selection of staff members is based solely upon the ability to fulfill the requirements of the job description, with due consideration of personal, educational, and physical qualifications and aptitudes necessary for the position involved.

Sheldon Municipal Library is an equal opportunity employer. Hiring, promotion, compensation, benefits, discipline, termination and all other employment decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, veteran status or any other protected status. Sheldon Municipal Library will not make any posting or employment decision that does not comply with applicable laws relating to labor and employment, equal employment opportunity, employment eligibility requirements or related matters.

## 12. UNATTENDED CHILDREN

Sheldon Municipal Library aims to provide a pleasant and safe environment for every child who visits the Library. While library staff will do what they can to ensure this, it must be understood that the Library does not act in loco parentis (in place of the parent). Library staff cannot guarantee the safety of young children left unattended in the Library.

For the protection and well-being of children who enjoy the Library, for the general welfare of all persons using the Library, and for the prevention of undue disruption of normal library activities, the following rules and regulations apply:

- A) Children under the age of six shall, at all times, be attended and adequately supervised by a parent or caregiver, and not by library personnel.
- B) School-aged children may use the Library unattended during non-school hours, or during school hours with parental notification, subject to rules and regulations concerning behavior, conduct, and demeanor.
  - 1. Appropriate activities include, but are not limited to: reading, writing, research, schoolwork, browsing for library materials, quiet talking, using the Internet, thinking, and daydreaming.
  - 2. Inappropriate activities include but are not limited to: loud or abusive talking, running, throwing objects, fighting, or any other activities which disrupt the Library or create an unsafe environment for other patrons or staff. Library staff has the discretion and authority to prohibit any activity which they deem may lead to an unsafe environment for others and/or which may cause damage to Library resources. Acts of intentional damage to Library resources (i.e. vandalism) may

result in an immediate suspension of Library privileges, notification of parents or guardians, and possible referral to local law enforcement.

C) Sheldon Municipal Library assumes no responsibility for children of any age left unattended at the Library. Parents or guardians assume all liability for personal injury and damage done by their children to the Library facility.

D) If a child is injured, library staff will make their best effort to contact a parent or caregiver. If the staff is unable to reach a parent or caregiver, they will seek emergency medical assistance, at the parent's/guardian's expense. Staff will complete an Accident/Incident report and notify the parent/guardian or caregiver as soon as possible. E) As closing time approaches, library staff will encourage unattended children to arrange for transportation. If a child is left unattended at closing time a member of the library staff will attempt to contact the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) to arrange safe transportation home. If these contact efforts are unsuccessful, the library staff member will seek assistance from the Vermont State Police. The parent/guardian may, at the Director's discretion, be charged for staff time.

### 13. BESTOWAL

Gifts of money, real property, and/or stock may be accepted if the conditions thereto are acceptable to the Board. Such gifts, at the time they are given, shall be designated by the grantor as "restricted" (given for a specific purpose) or "unrestricted" (given to the Library to use at its discretion). All gifts are assumed to be unrestricted unless otherwise specified by the grantor. For restricted gifts, the terms of the gift must be agreed upon, in writing, prior to acceptance. Restricted gifts for specific materials will only be accepted if they meet the criteria outlined in the Library's Collection Development Policy.