BORROWING POLICY & PROCEDURES

The Berkshire Athenaeum is the public library for the City of Pittsfield. Under standards one ("Be open to all residents of the Commonwealth") and six ("Lend books...and extend privileges to the holders of cards issued by other public libraries in the Commonwealth on a reciprocal basis.") of the REGULATIONS FOR MINIMUM PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE, residents of Massachusetts communities with public libraries certified by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners are eligible for a free borrower's card from the Berkshire Athenaeum. Library trustees reserve the right, on a case-by-case basis, to deny borrowing privileges to residents of decertified communities. Persons not residing in Massachusetts may, for a fee, be eligible for library privileges at the Athenaeum.

A. NEW REGISTRATIONS:

A.1. Identification Required: To be issued a new library card, the borrower must request the card in person at the library, and must provide a photo I.D., as well as identification bearing the borrower's name and current address. Cards are not issued as a result of requests received electronically or via U.S.P.S.

A.2 Acceptable Identification: Photo identification (e.g. driver's license) is preferred. However, a utility bill, check book, postmarked mail or other similar means of documenting a bona fide mailing address may be acceptable.

A.2.a. Forms of identification: While laminated cards or forms on paper are preferred, we may accept identification that has been downloaded or scanned to a smart phone.

A.3. Identification of Minors: Children or young adults with no identification may use a parent’s identification.

A.4. Addresses: Where a street address and mailing address are different, both should be entered on the borrower's record, with the mailing address listed as the primary entry.

A.5. Accommodations: In the interest of good public relations, if the patron indicates the identification process presents a hardship (i.e., participants in the state’s Address Confidentiality Program), the library employee should attempt to make a reasonable accommodation (see “Registration Accommodations: A Supplement to Borrowing Policy & Procedures” appended).

B. C/W MARS RECIPROCAL BORROWER REGISTRATION: When new patrons are registered it must be determined whether the patron has a library card at any other C/W MARS library before a card is issued by the Athenaeum. To do this, the library employee should take the following steps:

B.1. Ask the patron if they have a card from any other Massachusetts library.

B.2. If they have a card from another CWMARS library, scan the card and update if necessary. If they don’t have the card with them, look at their I.D. and run a name search in the CWMARS
patron database. If you locate them, make sure you select the correct name, then update if necessary.

B.3. If the patron has overdue or lost books or fines at the reported C/W MARS library, staff should exercise judgment as to whether an Athenaeum registration should be provided. Patrons will be blocked if they have over $10.00 in overdue fines or if they have one billed item. Staff may refuse to check items out to the patron at the Athenaeum until they pay their fines or return their books to the other C/W MARS library.

C. NON-RESIDENTS OF MASSACHUSETTS:

C.1. Non-Resident Fee: Borrowers not residing in Massachusetts who cannot provide the documentation noted in section D.1. below to exempt them from non-resident fees are considered OUT-OF-STATE BORROWERS and must pay the fee of $25.00 per year (any twelve month period) for the privilege of checking materials out of the Athenaeum.

C.2. Family Use of Cards: An out-of-state borrower's card may be used by other members of the same family (In state borrowers see section K.3. “Borrowing Restrictions – Use of Another Borrower’s Card” below). Each card issued will cost $25.00.

D. EXEMPTED NON-RESIDENTS OF MASSACHUSETTS:

D.1. Exemptions Defined: Borrowers not residing in Massachusetts must pay a non-resident fee to borrow materials from the Berkshire Athenaeum unless they can provide documentation demonstrating they:

- Own a vacation home, a time share condo or property in Massachusetts
- Rent lodging in Massachusetts for at least thirty days
- Reside in Massachusetts while attending school, a training program or summer camp lasting at least thirty days
- Work in Pittsfield

D.2. Verification of Exemption: Documentation for C.1. above may include all those listed in A.2. as well as lease or rental agreements, land deeds, school identification cards, official notice from their school, camp director or employer on letterhead stationery, or other similar means of documenting a temporary residence, such as a laminated I.D. card that includes a current date and the name of the institution where it was issued.

D.3. Permanent Address: Applicants must show identification with their permanent out-of-state address along with the documentation of their current temporary status.

E. INSTITUTIONAL CARDS: Institutions (e.g., school libraries, summer camps, or other like organizations) may apply for an Institutional Card that does not have the name of a particular person on the registration. When issuing a card to an institution:

E.1 Institutional cards may not be issued without the prior authority of the department supervisor.

E.2. If the institution has a library, the librarian should fill out the library card application and serve as the primary contact for the institution.

If there is no library, the individual in charge of library activities for the institution should fill it out.
E.3. A letter from the head of the institution, on official letterhead, is also required stating that the institution agrees to be responsible for all materials borrowed on this card, for fines incurred, as well as for loss or damage of materials and equipment used.

E.4. The loan periods and fines charged remain the same as for other patron types with the following exceptions:
- Holds limit is 50 (not 20)
- Maximum number of items checked out is 100 (not 50)

F. COMPUTER USE ONLY CARDS: Some patrons only visit the library to use the Internet. As an accommodation to visitors with no permanent address who might otherwise not qualify for a full service card, they may be registered for a “Computer Use Only” card. “Computer Use Only” cards will be issued to Pittsfield residents only.

F.1. A Computer Use Only card will enable the cardholder to:
- Reserve a computer and access the Internet.
- Access the PAC and do searches.
- Visit our website and use our database holdings.
- Use word processing or spreadsheet programs on library computers.
- Make printouts from their computer sessions.
- Check out headphones

F.2. A Computer Use Only card will not allow patrons to:
- Check out any library items.
- Place holds on items.
- Reserve or borrow museum passes.

F.3. To apply for the Computer Use Only card, the patron must present in person some form of identification with their name. A photo ID is preferred. See “Accommodations” in section A.5 and “Exemptions Defined” in section D.1 above.

G. FEES:

G.1. Except for those residing out of state (see section C above), there is no charge for full service, institutional or computer use only cards.

G.2. There is no charge or annual fee for Computer Use Only cards.

G.3. There is no charge to upgrade a registration from Computer Use Only to full service.

G.4. For a charge of $2.50, a new Computer Use Only, full service or institutional registration will be issued to replace a card that has been lost or stolen.

H. LIBRARY CARD RENEWAL:
To renew an Athenaeum card, patrons must appear in person at the library with their card in hand. If a patron’s address has changed they must show us proper I.D. (see section A above). Any patron who does not have their card or proper I.D. may not be able to get their card renewed.

H.1. Renewal by phone: CWMARS sends out automatic emails a week before a patron’s card is due to expire. While renewing in person is preferred, we will make an accommodation for patrons
who want to renew by phone. If their address, phone and email has not changed, we will renew their card over the phone for 3 business days. After that time the patron will have to come to the library with their card to get a full year renewal.

H.2. Old fines:
   Any fines or other charges on a patron’s card at renewal time must be paid in full.

H.3. Renewal at another CWMARS library: Patrons frequently visit more than one library. If a patron’s Athenaeum card has expired and they are attempting to use it at another CWMARS library, the staff at the library may renew the card. Conversely, if a patron comes to the Athenaeum with an expired card from another CWMARS library, we will renew it.

H.4. Renewal requirements at another CWMARS library: It is not expected that staff at other libraries will follow the Athenaeum policy that requires a patron to have their card on hand when they renew it.

H.5. Out of state renewals: If a patron is renewing a BERKSHIRE ATHENAEUM card, they must pay another $25.00 fee. The Alert Statement on the patron record will be updated to show proof of payment.
   - If a patron renews an out of state Berkshire Athenaeum card at another library, it’s possible that the fee will not be collected at that library.
   - If they have an out of state card from another CWMARS library we will renew it without collecting a fee.

I. BORROWER RESPONSIBILITY:

I.1. Borrowers are responsible for all items borrowed on their cards, including the fines charged for overdue materials and replacement costs for items lost or damaged.

I.2. Borrowers are responsible for keeping their registration current. Any borrower who has mail returned to the library as undeliverable, has a phone number that is not current, or has an email address that is “not deliverable,” may be blocked from the use of library services until the registration is updated. Identification may be required (as with "New Registrations" in Section A above) at the discretion of library staff.

I.3. Anyone, of any age, who is eligible for a library card may use any materials in the Berkshire Athenaeum and shall not have that privilege limited by any staff person. In accordance with the Athenaeum’s Collection Development / Maintenance Policy, parents who wish to deny their children access to certain materials must take the responsibility themselves.

J. CONFIDENTIALITY OF BORROWING RECORDS:

J.1. Borrower Confidentiality: In accordance with Chapter 78, Section 7 of Massachusetts General Laws1, the borrowing records of individual patrons concerning type of material and/or specific titles borrowed and other records identifying the name of library users is considered confidential by the Berkshire Athenaeum. Only the Director may authorize the dissemination of this information to a third party, and this will be done only when required by law.

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1 “That part of the records of a public library which reveals the identity and intellectual pursuits of a person using such library shall not be a public record….”
J.2. Records of Minors: Information about materials borrowed by minors may be granted to the legal guardians once those items have achieved a status of overdue.

K. GENERAL LOAN PERIODS: Most library materials are loaned for a period of three weeks. New fiction and new non-fiction are borrowed for two weeks. Magazines, VHS videocassettes and DVD’s are loaned for one week.

L. BORROWING RESTRICTIONS:

L.1. Items Checked Out: There is a 50 item limit on the total number of items that a borrower may take from the Athenaeum at any given time. Additionally, the following limits per library card are enforced to assure that there is sufficient information or materials available in a given format. Limits refer to both adult and juvenile collections unless specified to the contrary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># ITEMS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-fiction in same subject matter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graphic Novels / Comics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New non-fiction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music audio cassette</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music CD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Books on Tape</td>
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<tr>
<td>Books on CD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magazines (Juvenile or Young Adult)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi-media and/or Teacher kit</td>
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<td>VHS video cassette</td>
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<td>DVD</td>
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L.2. Blocks: A patron will be denied borrowing privileges, or blocked, if the account has overdue fines in excess of $10.00, billed items that have not been returned, or charges for damage to library materials.

L.3. Use of Another Borrower’s Card

L.3.1. The Athenaeum discourages the sharing of library cards between family members and friends.

L.3.2. A loan may be denied if the patron attempting to check items out is not the same person as indicated on the borrower card presented. In extenuating circumstances, it may be possible to use another person’s card to check out items. For example:

- A patron is picking out items for their partner who is physically not able to come to the library.
- A patron is picking up their spouse’s holds and has their card.

If one of these scenarios is happening on a regular basis, the two library cards should be GROUPED or an Alert Message should be added to both cards so staff don’t have to keep questioning the patrons each time they come to pick up items.

A loan may also be denied if the patron attempting to check items out is doing so because they have outstanding debt or blocks that would have prevented the loan on the patron’s own card. As an example, if a mother’s card is blocked she may be denied borrowing privileges on her children’s cards until her outstanding debt is settled. Every effort should be made not to penalize a child for the parent’s delinquency.
L.4. Positive Identification:
L.4.1. The Athenaeum may request positive identification from any person checking materials out.
L.4.2. Patrons are expected to present their library card to conduct all library business. However, as an accommodation, we will accept some form of I.D. (in paper form or on a smart phone) in lieu of a library card as long as the card is not expired. Patrons who have loaded their library card into their smart phone should be prepared to show traditional I.D. if the library scanners can’t read the card on the smart phone.

Patrons who do not bring their library card or positive identification to the library with them may not be able to reserve a computer, check out materials, reserve museum passes or have access to their library account.

M. RENEWALS: All circulating library material is renewable provided another reader has not put a hold on it. Exceptions are made for certified disabled individuals (see “Extended Loan Periods: A Supplement to Borrowing Policy & Procedures” in the following section).

N. EXTENDED LOAN PERIODS FOR THE DISABLED: As part of the effort to assure equal access to the information available in the collections of the Berkshire Athenaeum and to assure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, steps are taken by the library to provide for reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities.

N.1. Certified Disabled: To be eligible for an exception to the library’s Borrowing Policy & Procedures, the borrower must be able to provide certification of disability from a qualified health care or education professional (depending upon the disability), with appropriate justification from the borrower as to why the disability warrants the exception. Such justification should be directly related to the borrower’s ability to process the material (i.e. dyslexia or other learning disability) and should stipulate whether this is a one-time or ongoing request. Age alone does not qualify as a certifiable disability eligible for exception under this policy.

N.2. Exceptions: Exceptions may be authorized by the senior employee in either the Circulation Department or the Children’s Library (whichever department receives the request) at the time the request is made if the request requires an immediate response, otherwise the request should be deferred for the departmental supervisor. Only departmental supervisors are authorized to negotiate open-ended arrangements. Such arrangements should be abstracted by library staff in a patron note on the C/W MARS system to alert staff at subsequent transactions. If an employee other than the department supervisor negotiates an exception, a copy of the transaction should be printed off with a note explaining the circumstances and brought to the attention of the supervisor.

N.3. Limitations:
N.3.1. Negotiated Requests: First-time requests by certified disabled borrowers to negotiate exceptions to the library’s Borrowing Policy & Procedures must be done in person at the library.
N.3.2. Reserve Books: Items on reserve for others will not be granted extended loan periods regardless of the extenuating circumstances of the certified disabled requesting borrower.
N.3.3. Interlibrary Loaned Materials: Materials owned by other libraries will not be granted extended loan periods regardless of the extenuating circumstances of the requesting borrower because those lending periods are established by the lending libraries.
N.3.4. One Extended Loan Limit: Items granted extended loan under these guidelines will be limited to one extension period only. Requests for additional time on items will be denied.

N.3.5. Total Item Limits: Persons requesting items be granted extended loan periods under these guidelines will be limited to six (6) items in circulation at a given time.

O. BOOK RETURNS: Books may be returned at any time in the book drops outside the building, however audio-visual materials and kits are fragile and should always be returned to the library's circulation desks to prevent damage.

P. OBTAINING UNAVAILABLE MATERIALS:

P.1. Holds: Most items in circulation owned by the Athenaeum or other Massachusetts public libraries in the C/W MARS or Commonwealth Catalog systems may be reserved or placed on hold. There is a limit of twenty holds per library card (see “Holds Procedures: A Supplement to Borrowing Policy & Procedures”).

P.2. Interlibrary Loan: Materials not owned by the Athenaeum or other libraries in the Massachusetts library network may often be borrowed or photocopied from the collection of another library. This service is available through the library’s Reference Department (see “Interlibrary Loan Policy & Procedures”).

P.3. Request for Purchase: The Athenaeum welcomes suggestions for purchase of materials not in the collection with the understanding that such requests are subject to the same selection criteria as materials considered for purchase. Materials not purchased may be requested through interlibrary loan.