

## **RICHMOND FREE LIBRARY**

### **Library Policies**

#### **Mission**

The Richmond Free Library (RFL) provides resources and experiences that inspire, inform, entertain, and connect members of the community throughout their lives.

#### **Materials Selection**

Richmond Free Library has adopted the principles documented in the *Library Bill of Rights* and the *Freedom to Read Statement* of the American Library Association (See *Appendix A & B*).

The Richmond Free Library Board of Trustees has delegated the responsibility for material selection (print and non-print) to the Library Director and staff who will utilize the reviewing tools of the profession.

Materials available in Richmond Free Library represent a diversity of viewpoints. Library materials are chosen for value of interest, information, entertainment and enlightenment of those in our community. In no case will library materials be excluded because of race or nationality or the social, political, or religious views of the authors. To enable citizens to form their own opinions, the library will attempt to provide materials that present diverse points of view. Other considerations include public demand, quality of writing, cost, and importance of subject matter. The library's varied collection is available to all; however, it is not expected that all the collection will appeal to everyone.

Donated materials are accepted based upon practices of normal acquisitions and on the condition that the library has the authority to make whatever disposition of the item it deems advisable.

#### **Reconsideration Policy**

Richmond Free Library patrons who wish to request the withdrawal or reclassification of materials owned by the library are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Library Director. If the patron is not satisfied with the response, they should complete a *Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources* Form and submit it to the Library Director and the Chair of the Library Board of Trustees. The Board will discuss the request and the Library Director's response at a subsequent Trustee meeting. The patron will be informed of the date of that meeting, and may attend and give a statement if they wish. Regardless of whether they attend, they will be informed of the Board's decision.

#### **Library Privileges, Loan Periods & Fines**

Individuals and families living in the town of Richmond have free use of the Library and may register as patrons with proof of residence and completion of a registration form. The following documents are examples of proof of residence: driver's license, utility bill, car registration, lease, etc.) Youth may receive a library card at age six. Receipt of a card indicates cardholder accepts responsibility for lost or damaged materials. Nonresident patronage shall be available for a yearly fee of \$50 per person, ages 12 and over. Use of the library or its services may be denied by the librarian for just cause, including failure to return books or to pay charges, destruction of library property, disturbance of other patrons, or any other objectionable conduct on library premises.

The library participates in the Chittenden County Home Card System (*see Appendix D*). Nonresidents living in towns with libraries participating in the Home Card System and

wishing to use RFL must apply for a library card in their town of residence.

RFL materials are loaned for two-week periods with the privilege of renewal unless a request for the book has been placed by another patron. Material borrowed from external sources may be governed by different loan periods, possible fees, and renewal rules.

No fines are charged but donations are welcome on overdue materials. It is expected that the patron will pay the full value of lost or damaged materials.

## **Behavior Policies**

The Richmond Free Library supports the Library Bill of Rights in all its interpretations by the American Library Association. To protect the rights of all Library users to utilize Library resources to pursue independent learning, knowledge and other activities in a peaceful Library environment, staff members shall ask individuals who may be interfering with the rights of others to leave.

Types of behavior which will not be tolerated are:

- Loud talking which may disturb others.
- Inappropriate or harassing behavior.
- Abusive language to staff members or library patrons.
- Loitering, smoking, alcohol or illegal drug use on library grounds
- Behavior which violates public laws governing criminal behavior, such as lewdness, breach of the peace, disorderly conduct, stalking, assault, or vandalism.

The Richmond Free Library is committed to a professional working and learning environment which is fair and responsible; and which is free of discriminatory, inappropriate, and disrespectful conduct or communication.

Harassment inhibits a person's ability to function effectively as an employee or library patron and violates acceptable standards of conduct. Harassment can occur between patrons and library staff, or between patrons, and is defined as any action taken or situation created intentionally by conduct (verbal or physical) that is intimidating, demeaning, hostile, or offensive, or by initiation of unwelcome physical advances, or sexual conduct.

## **Sanctions**

In most cases, one verbal warning will be issued to any patron who violates the Behavior Policy. A second violation may result in expulsion from the library and its grounds. No warning will be required, however, if in the judgment of the library staff, the behavior in question (a) violates federal, state, county, or municipal laws, or (b) poses an immediate threat to the safety or well-being of other library patrons or staff. Library staff are authorized to enforce these rules.

The library reserves the right to revoke or restrict library privileges of any patron for behavior contrary to these rules and regulations.

In cases where the offending individual does not comply with library directives, the police may be called for assistance.

## **Library Facilities**

Use of facilities by outside groups is authorized in accordance with the library's *Use of*

*Space Contract.* Use of the library's facilities by individuals or organizations is subject to review and approval by the Library Director or Assistant Director. For more details, see *Use of Space Contract* form. Exhibits and displays are also subject to approval by the Director or Assistant Director.

## **Computer Use Policy**

Library patrons use the library computers, Internet and Wi-Fi at their own risk. The library assumes no responsibility and shall have no liability for any direct, indirect, or consequential damages arising from the library's Internet connections.

Library internet service should be used in a responsible and ethical manner consistent with the educational and informational purposes for which it is provided.

## **Policy Regarding Minors Using the Library**

The Richmond Free Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming environment that encourages children to visit the Library, attend programs, and use the Library collection and computers.

It is not the responsibility of library staff to supervise children's behavior (except as it interferes with library services), restrict which library resources children may access or to monitor whether children remain in the library building. Parents or caregivers are responsible for establishing and enforcing boundaries or restrictions with the children they supervise.

Youth volunteers will be supervised by staff only while they are serving their assigned volunteer hours.

- **Children through age 8** must have a parent or caregiver (caregivers must be 16 years of age or older) in the immediate vicinity. Parents remain responsible for the actions of their children in the Library.
- **Children aged 9 and over** may use the Library unattended for an amount of time appropriate to their age and maturity. Parents remain responsible for the actions of their children. Children using inappropriate behavior will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child shall be asked to leave the Library. If the child is unaccompanied, staff will contact their parent/guardian to have them picked up. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them.
- **Children present at Closing time--** Parents, guardians, caregivers, and/or teachers are solely responsible for ensuring that children have transportation home once the Library closes. Library staff is not permitted to drive or transport children home using a personal vehicle. If there are any unattended children left in the library at closing time without transportation, staff will attempt to contact the parent or guardian. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the matter will be referred to the Richmond Police Department.

## **Confidentiality**

Patron confidentiality is maintained in accordance with Vermont law in Title 22 V.S.A. Chapter 4 & 171-173 (*Appendix E*), The *Richmond Free Library Privacy and Confidentiality Policy (Appendix F)* details specific RFL policies governing challenges to patron confidentiality.

Only the Library Director, Chair of the Board or their designee (in the Director's absence)

are authorized to receive or comply with requests from law enforcement officers. Legal counsel may be contacted to determine the proper response to such requests. Library staff and volunteers must refer any law enforcement inquiries to the Library Director or Chair of the Board.

### **Public Library-School Library Relationship**

The Richmond Free Library and the school are companion educational agencies and strive to work together to provide coordinated service to all residents.

### **Richmond Free Library Gift Policy**

The Richmond Free Library welcomes gifts of books, other materials and monetary donations that enhance our collections, services or facilities. The library reserves the right to refuse any gift or donation that the Director and Board of Library Trustees deem not in the best interest of the library to accept. All gifts or donations to the Library shall be final and no restrictions on the Library's ownership, possession, use or disposition of the gift shall be in effect other than those approved by the express vote of the Board of Trustees.

#### **General Guidelines:**

**Materials:** Gifts of books or other materials in good condition are accepted with the understanding that items not added to collections will be disposed of at the discretion of the Library. These items may be given to the Friends, donated to another community group or discarded.

**Recognition gifts:** The Library welcomes monetary gifts intended for the purchase of materials for the collections in recognition of individuals or organizations. The library staff will choose items which accommodate the donor's subject preferences; specific titles may be purchased if the specified materials meet our collection development policies.

**Monetary gifts:** Financial donations are welcome and will be deposited with the Friends of the Richmond Free Library to further the Library's mission. Financial gifts intended to fund a special project or building improvement will be deposited into a special campaign account, large gifts should be discussed with the Library's Board of Trustees before being transmitted to the Library.

**Art & decorative objects:** Because of the Library's limited display and storage areas and focus on its primary mission as a Library, potential donors of art & decorative objects are requested to discuss gifts of this nature with the Director. Gifts that require special care or conservation will not be accepted.

**Valuation:** The Library will provide written acknowledgment of the receipt of gifts. No determination of the value of a gift or donation will be established or offered by the library, potential donors should have their items appraised prior to donating them if desired.

**Future disposition of gifts:** The Library will not guarantee that any gift will remain a permanent part of the collection, furnishings, building or grounds. Excess or unwanted items may be offered to other organizations, sold or discarded.

### **Library Governance**

The Richmond Free Library is a municipal department for administrative purposes, however, "library trustees are given broad authority to oversee the library. Vermont law provides that, once appointed, trustees shall have full power to manage the public library, make bylaws, elect officers, establish a library policy and receive, control and manage property which shall come into the hands of the municipality by gift, purchase, devise or bequest for the use and benefit of the library." (From *The Law of Public Libraries*, A joint publication of the Office of the Secretary of State and the Vermont Department of Libraries, April 2010)

Trustees have the power to write orders to the treasurer on the library accounts, to accept gifts on behalf of the municipal public library, as well as the authority to decide how the money is to be spent.

Invoices and other requests for payments, accompanied by appropriate documentation and designation of accounts to be used, will be submitted to the Town's Financial Officer for data entry. Once all requests for payment have been completed, the Town's Financial Officer will prepare a warrant sheet indicating invoices to be paid.

Once a warrant is prepared, two or more members of the Library Board of Trustees may examine and allow (as indicated by signature) claims against library funds for library expenses and authorize the Town Treasurer to draw orders for such claims to the party entitled to payment. Orders shall state definitely the purpose for which they are drawn and shall serve as full authority and directive to the treasurer to make the payments. A record of orders will be available for review at the library.

## **Personnel**

All staff members are entitled to an employment environment that contributes to job satisfaction, high morale, and acceptable working conditions. The Richmond Free Library, as a municipal department, is guided by the Town of Richmond Personnel Policy.

The following are specific to the Richmond Free Library:

- The Board of Trustees is responsible for an annual written evaluation of the Library Director.
- The Board of Trustees, only, may terminate the Library Director for just cause.
- Hiring, supervision, and termination of library staff are the responsibility of the Library Director.
- The Library Director determines staffing needs, allocation of time, and staff responsibilities.
- Grievances filed by library employees are submitted through the chain of command to the Library Director and/or the Board of Trustees.

## **Staff Development**

Library staff is required to participate in ongoing professional training in accordance with current standards for public libraries, with all reasonable expenses paid. Training activities must be relevant to current position requirements and participation must be approved in advance by the library director. All library staff are required to be aware of and maintain proficiency in current technology and resources offered by RFL to best assist patrons.

## **Board of Trustees & Library Director Responsibilities**

The Board of Trustees governs the library. Their duties include strategic planning, establishing library policy, approving the guidelines governing acquisitions, supervising the Library Director, supervising the library budget, and ensuring the sustainability of the library. The Library Director governs the daily operation of the library overseeing patron services, policy implementation, supervision of staff, resource acquisition and delivery, and scheduling and interaction with service contractors. See also attached *By-Laws*).

## **Library Building**

The Board of Trustees, Library Director and the Town of Richmond share responsibility for maintenance and capital improvements of the library building based on a *Memorandum of Understanding* signed on October 13, 2021. The Director and Board will forward requests for needed capital repairs and improvements which fall under Town responsibilities to the

Selectboard or the appropriate Town Committee for action. The Trustees and Library Director work together to obtain bids, contract, schedule and supervise work that falls under their responsibilities.

### **Policies Review**

These policies shall be reviewed at least once a year by the Board of Trustees and shall either be reapproved as written or amended as that body may deem fitting.

These policies may be amended at any regular or special meeting by a 3/5 vote.

**Approved by the Richmond Free Library Board of Trustees, October 8, 2024.**