

FORT PLAIN FREE LIBRARY

# POLICY MANUAL

A reference guide  
to library policies  
& procedures

2026

# FORT PLAIN FREE LIBRARY POLICY MANUAL

This policy manual was created by the Fort Plain Free Library Board of Trustees and Library Staff, and was adopted by the Board of Trustees on January 28, 2026.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Select the title for each section to jump to specific content within the policy manual

**01**

**INTRODUCTION**

**02**

**INTERNAL POLICIES**

**03**

**EXTERNAL POLICIES**

**04**

**PERSONNEL HANDBOOK  
(TBD)**

**05**

**FINANCIAL POLICY  
HANDBOOK (TBD)**

**06**

**LIST OF FORMS**

## 01 INTRODUCTION

The Fort Plain Free Library Policy Manual is designed to support the library's mission, vision, and core values by outlining its operational methods and procedures. This manual is intended to aid in informed decision-making and to also convey fundamental guiding principles to both the library staff and the public.

### Mission

The Fort Plain Free Library is a community-focused institution dedicated to providing free and equitable access to information, technology, and cultural resources.

### Vision

The Fort Plain Free Library seeks to cultivate both a space and a culture that inspires creativity, curiosity, and empathy, while preserving knowledge of the past and providing tools to build a more informed future.

### Core Values at a Glance

Ease of Access  
Continuous Learning  
Creativity  
Equity  
Integrity  
Intellectual Freedom  
Standards of Excellence  
Sustainability  
Teamwork  
User Experience

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the mission, vision, and core values of the Fort Plain Free Library, please refer to the library's long-range plan.

# INTERNAL POLICIES

02

POLICY  
STRUCTURE

Select the title for each policy to jump to specific sections within the policy manual

## CATEGORIES

ADMINISTRATION	BOARD	PERSONNEL	SAFETY
----------------	-------	-----------	--------

## INDIVIDUAL POLICIES

INCLEMENT WEATHER	CODE OF CONDUCT/ETHICS	EQUAL OPPORT/ ANTI-DISCRIM.	WORKPLACE SAFETY
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION	TRUSTEE EDUCATION	CODE OF CONDUCT/ETHICS	INCIDENTS & EMERGENCIES
PUBLIC RELATIONS	CONFLICT OF INTEREST	COMPUTER/ INTERNET	
	REMOVAL OF A TRUSTEE	HARASSMENT	
	OPEN MEETINGS	GRIEVANCE	
	MEETINGS PROCEDURES	WHISTLEBLOWER	
	PUBLIC COMMENT	VOLUNTEERS	
		PERSONNEL HANDBOOK	

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library will make every reasonable effort to open to the public as scheduled, consistent with safe access for the public and staff.

In the event that weather conditions cause transportation and access to the library to become hazardous for patrons and staff, the library may close, delay opening, or close ahead of schedule. The decision to close, delay opening, or close ahead of schedule will be made by the director, who will be guided by national and New York state weather advisories, local school closings, and their own observation of local weather conditions.

Notices of closures, early closings, or delayed openings will be posted on the library's social media pages, as well as physically on the main library doors. Staff will immediately notify any patrons who may be in the building in the event of an early closing.

Note: When the Library is closed, patrons can manage their accounts online, access library databases, and use the Libby mobile app to check out e-materials.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/ PUBLIC ACCESS TO RECORDS (FOIL) POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library has adopted this Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Policy to ensure transparency of records and administration documents.

The primary goals of the library's FOIL Policy is to establish:

- The administrator of library records;
- The process for requesting information from the library; and
- The library's process for responding to information requests.

New York State's FOIL allows members of the public access to records from certain agencies. The full scope of Public Officers Law Article 6 §87 can be found on the New York State Committee on Open Government website.

As an association library, the library is not a municipal, school district, or legislative district entity. Therefore the library is not bound to conform to the requirements of FOIL. However, the library endeavors to meet expectations of transparency and will consider all information requests made pursuant to FOIL.

## Administration

The library director is the administrator of library records and records access officer. The director will receive, process, and respond to all inquiries relating to the availability of library records pursuant to FOIL.

## Requests

Requests shall be submitted in the following manner:

- Use the FOIL policy request form provided in the List of Forms.
- Direct the request to the following address:

Library Director  
Fort Plain Free Library  
19 Willett Street  
Fort Plain, NY 13339

- Specify the records requested to be disclosed for inspection or to be copied. If you want any records certified, you must specify which ones.
- Reimburse the library for reproducing and certifying (if requested) the records: \$0.10 per page for employee-copied records, and \$1.00 per page for certification of records.

## Process

The Fort Plain Free Library will strive to answer requests within ten business days of the date received. When an extension is necessary to properly respond, the reason for this extension will be explained and the expected response date will be provided.

Records may be available for inspection in person at no cost and by appointment. An employee must be present throughout the inspection.

If a request is denied, the denial may be appealed to the president of the board of trustees using the FOIL appeal policy form provided in the List of Forms.

## **LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICY

The objectives of the Fort Plain Free Library's public relations policy are as follows:

- To enhance community awareness regarding library resources and services;
- To promote public interest in and engagement with the library;
- To cultivate public understanding and support for the library and its integral role within the community.

The library board acknowledges that public relations are the responsibility of everyone associated with the library. The board encourages its members and all staff to recognize that they serve as representatives of the library in every public interaction. Providing excellent service is fundamental to maintaining strong public relations.

In order to provide the public with consistent and accurate information regarding library policies, procedures, programs, and services—and to present the library in the best possible light—the following guidelines have been established:

- The board president and library director, shall serve as the spokespeople for the library on all matters and will be responsible for all official communications to the public and media. In cases of emergency, official statements shall be issued by the board president and library director. Should it become necessary for other library staff to communicate information during such circumstances, library administration will inform them of the appropriate messaging.
- The board president shall act as the spokesperson for the board.
- All library promotional and informational materials (e.g., newsletters, website, social media, handouts, brochures, posters, etc) disseminated or displayed to the public shall adhere to the quality standards established by the library and its director. These materials, as well as press releases, must uphold a professional appearance, maintain accuracy, and reflect positively on the library.
- The library's logo shall be displayed on all promotional and informational materials. Press releases are to be issued on library letterhead featuring the library's logo.

- Library staff are tasked with ensuring that all promotional and informational materials produced will adhere to prescribed quality design standards.

## Outreach

Library staff members may further engage in public relations efforts by addressing local groups, participating in community organizations and events, visiting classrooms, and conducting tours and informational sessions at the library.

## **LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS POLICY

In accepting a position on the board of the Fort Plain Free Library, board members agree to abide by the following code of conduct.

In general, board members have a responsibility to ensure that the library can effectively continue its mission of serving the population of the Fort Plain Central School District. This responsibility includes adherence to the American Library Association's Code of Ethics, listed below. It also includes the avoidance of behaviors which might be damaging to the library, its reputation, or its ability to conduct operations in a fair and ethical manner. In all cases, board members should abide by all federal, state, and local laws. Board members should always act in the best interests of all members of the library's service area, without giving preferential treatment to any particular group.

Board members must distinguish between their personal opinions and the best interests of the library. In cases where a board member's personal opinions or beliefs may contrast with the formal position of the library board, board members should publicly support and defer to the board's formal decisions.

Board members should not divulge confidential library information, such as information learned during executive sessions of library board meetings. Board members should not comment publicly on any future plans or library business that has not been formally confirmed during a board meeting.

Board members must avoid potential conflicts of interest in the course of their duties. Conflicts of interest include situations in which board members, in their capacity as board members, may benefit personally or financially at the expense of the library, library patrons, or library personnel. For example, a board member could have a conflicting interest with a library patron on matters not involving the library. Board members must recuse themselves from situations in which the appearance of a conflict of interest exists.

While in the library, board members must adhere to the patron code of conduct. Board members may set policy and monitor library operations, but may not intervene in the day-to-day running of the library.

Board members are responsible for regularly attending library board meetings and completing any duties assigned during meetings, including those associated with committees established by the board. Board members who are unable to attend meetings or complete these duties should resign their position. If any trustee shall fail to attend three consecutive meetings without excuse accepted as satisfactory by the trustees, such trustee shall be deemed to have resigned (Education Law Section 226(4)).

The 'Public Library Trustee Ethics Statement' provided below is an official statement from United for Libraries (Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations) - A division of the American Library Association and has been formally adopted by the Fort Plain Free Library board of trustees.

### Public Library Trustee Ethics Statement

Public library trustees are accountable for the resources of the library as well as to see that the library provides the best possible service to its community. Every Trustee makes a personal commitment to contribute the time and energy to faithfully carry out his/her duties and responsibilities effectively and with absolute truth, honor and integrity.

- Trustees shall respect the opinions of their colleagues and not be critical or disrespectful when they disagree or oppose a viewpoint different than their own.
- Trustees shall comply with all the laws, rules and regulations that apply to them and to their library.
- Trustees, in fulfilling their responsibilities, shall not be swayed by partisan interests, public pressure or fear of criticism.
- Trustees shall not engage in discrimination of any kind and shall uphold library patrons' rights to privacy in the use of library resources.
- Trustees must distinguish clearly in their actions and statements between their personal philosophies and attitudes and those of the library, acknowledging and supporting the formal position of the Board even if they disagree.
- Trustees must respect the confidential nature of library business and not disclose such information to anyone. Trustees must also be aware of and in compliance with Freedom of Information laws
- Trustees must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained as a result of their position or access to privileged library information, for either themselves or others.
- A Trustee shall immediately disqualify him/herself whenever the appearance of or a conflict of interest exists.

# INTERNAL POLICY // BOARD POLICY

- Trustees shall not use their position to gain unwarranted privileges or advantages for themselves or others from the library or from those who do business with the library.
- Trustees shall not interfere with the management responsibilities of the director or the supervision of library staff.
- Trustees shall support the efforts of librarians in resisting censorship of library materials by groups or individuals.

Approved by the United for Libraries Board in January 2012

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# TRUSTEE EDUCATION POLICY

The purpose of the Trustee Education policy is to comply with New York State Education Law Section 260-D, which requires members of library boards of trustees, beginning January 1, 2023, to complete a minimum of two hours of trustee education annually from a provider approved by the Commissioner of Education that addresses the financial oversight, accountability, fiduciary responsibilities, and the general powers and duties of library trustees.

Each member of the library board must demonstrate compliance with this policy by filing evidence with the board president annually.

## Administration

Each year trustees are required to complete two hours of continuing education during their term on the library board.

According to Section 260-D, each trustee shall demonstrate compliance with the requirements by filing with the president of the board of trustees evidence of completion of trustee education from an approved provider. Such evidence shall include one of the following:

- Certificates of completion issued by one or more approved providers; or
- A signed self-assurance of completion (included at the end of this policy).
  - Such assurance shall identify the approved trustee education providers, a description of the format and content of the completed instruction activities, the date and time such member began and completed each instruction activity, and an explanation of why a certificate of completion was not available from such approved providers.

Evidence of completion shall be submitted to the board president within 30 days of the completion of the fiscal year.

Should a trustee fail to submit evidence of completion by the above date, the trustee will be suspended from duty until evidence of completion is filed. Should

a trustee in suspension fail to provide evidence of completion within 90 days, they will be assumed to have resigned from the board.

Compliance will be tracked through the library's annual report to the state.

## Approved Providers

At the state level, trustee education providers and activities (topic and formats) are approved by the New York State Library acting on behalf of the Commissioner of Education.

In addition to pre-approving public library systems as trustee education providers, the state library has delegated authority to public library systems to approve additional trustee education providers and activities (topics and formats) for their member libraries.

## Pre-approved providers

- New York State Library/Division of Library Development
- Public Library Systems
- WebJunction
- New York Library Association (including the Library Trustees Section and other Sections/Roundtables)
- Reference and Research Library Resources Councils
- Empire State Library Network (formerly New York 3Rs Association)
- PULISDO (Public Library System Directors Organization)
- ALA (American Library Association) including United for Libraries and other Divisions

## Allowable Formats

Trustee education may be delivered online or in person. The format of this education may include any of the following:

- Lectures
- Workshops
- Webinars
- Online courses
- State or national library association conferences

## Costs of Continuing Education

Actual and necessary costs incurred by a trustee in complying with the trustee education requirements may be reimbursed by the library. All continuing education requests for reimbursement must be pre-approved by the library board.

### **LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

## Article I - Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect the interests of the Fort Plain Free Library when it is contemplating entering into a *transaction* or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an *officer* or *key employee* of the Fort Plain Free Library or might result in an excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement, not replace, any applicable state or federal laws.

## Article II - Definitions

Officer means a member of the board of trustees of the Fort Plain Free Library, or of any of its committees, excluding advisory committees.

Key Employee means any employee who has ultimate responsibility for implementing the decisions of the board of trustees; or for supervising the management, administration, or operation of the Fort Plain Free Library; or for managing the finances of the Fort Plain Free Library. Other employees may be deemed to be *key employees* based on an evaluation of all facts and circumstances guided by 26 CFR §53.4958-3.

Interest means a financial or other material benefit which will accrue to the *officer* or *key employee*, or to a *family member* or a *business associate*, from a *transaction*. A gift or favor received by the *officer* or *key employee* from another party to the proposed transaction during the period when the transaction is being considered also constitutes an *interest* in the *transaction*.

Family Member includes: the *officer*'s or *key employee*'s spouse, brothers or sisters (by whole or half blood); spouses of brothers or sisters (by whole or half blood); ancestors; children (a legally adopted child of an individual is treated as a child of such individual by blood); grandchildren; great grandchildren; and spouses of children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Business Associate means any for-profit or not-for-profit entity of which the *officer* or *key employee* is an employee, owner, or member of the governing board, or in which the *officer* or *key employee* has a beneficial interest. A publicly-traded corporation shall not be considered by a *business associate* if the total amount of stock in that corporation owned by the *officer* or *key employee* and all the *officer*'s or *key employee*'s *family members* and *business*

associates is five percent (5%) or less of the issued and outstanding stock of the corporation.

Transaction means any contract or other arrangement to which the Fort Plain Free Library is a party.

Interested Person means an officer or key employee who has an *interest* in a transaction.

Conflict of Interest means that the officer or key employee has a substantial financial *interest* in the proposed *transaction*.

A Related Party Transaction is a *transaction* in which an officer or key employee has any financial *interest*.

## Article III - Procedures

1. An officer or key employee who realizes that they may have an *interest* in a proposed *transaction* being considered by the board of trustees or a committee will refrain from discussing the *transaction* with members of the board or of the committee, except to the extent necessary to disclose the *interest*, and will also refrain from seeking in any other way to influence the decision concerning that *transaction*.
2. When the board of trustees or a committee is considering a *transaction* in which an *interested person* who is a member of the board or that committee has an *interest* the *interested person* must, at the earliest opportunity, disclose to the remaining members of the board or the committee the existence of the *interest* and all material facts concerning it.
3. After disclosing the *interest* and all material facts concerning it, the *interested person* shall leave the board or committee meeting, and the remaining board or committee members shall review the information provided and determine whether a *conflict of interest* or *related party transaction* exists.
4. If the board or committee determines that a *conflict of interest* or *related party transaction* exists, the *interested person* shall not be present when the *transaction* is discussed and may not participate in the decision whether to enter into the *transaction*.

5. Before approving or recommending the *transaction*, the board or committee shall conduct a reasonable investigation of the available alternatives to the proposed *transaction*. If, from that investigation, it appears that the Fort Plain Free Library cannot with reasonable effort obtain a more advantageous *transaction* from a source that would not give rise to a *conflict of interest or related party transaction*, the board or committee may approve or recommend the *transaction* if it determines by the affirmative vote of a majority of the entire board or of the committee that the *transaction* is fair, reasonable, for the Fort Plain Free Library's own benefit, and in its best interest.
6. The minutes of any meeting of the board or of a committee at which an *officer's or key employee's interest* in a *transaction* is discussed shall include: the name of each *officer or key employee* who disclosed, or who was otherwise discovered to have, an *interest* in the *transaction*; the nature of each such *interest*; the decision of the board or committee concerning whether a *conflict of interest or related party transaction* exists; and the rationale underlying the board's or the committee's decision
7. The minutes of any meeting at which the board or a committee discussed a *transaction* in which an *officer or key employee* has an *interest* that constitutes a *conflict of interest or related party transaction* shall include: the names of all persons who were present during the discussion of the *transaction*; the content of the discussion, including any alternatives which were considered; the names of all persons who were present during any vote relating to the *transaction*; and a record of each vote.
8. The failure to disclose an *interest* in a proposed *transaction* is cause for removal from the board or the committee, and cause for employee discipline up to and including termination.

## Article IV - Initial Annual Statements

1. Each *officer* shall, before assuming office, and each *key employee* shall, before commencing the duties of the position, sign a statement which affirms that the *officer or key employee*:
  - a) Has received a copy of this policy;
  - b) Has read, and understands, the policy;
  - c) Has agreed to comply with the policy; and

- d) Understands that the Fort Plain Free Library can maintain its federal tax-exempt status only if it engages primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.
- 2. Each *officer or key employee* shall, before assuming office or commencing the duties of the position, and annually thereafter, file with the library director a written statement to be filed in the director's office disclosing, to the best of the *officer's or key employee's* knowledge, any of the *officer's or key employee's* business associates with which the library has a relationship, and any *transaction* in which the library is a participant in which the *officer or key employee* might have a conflicting interest.

## Article V - Periodic Reviews

- 1. To ensure that the Fort Plain Free Library operates in a manner consistent with its charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, address:
  - a) Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on relevant survey information, and are the result of arm's length bargaining.
  - b) Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the library's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in an impermissible private benefit or an excess benefit transaction.
- 2. When conducting such reviews the Fort Plain Free Library may, but need not, use outside advisors, but their use shall not relieve the board of its responsibility for ensuring that periodic reviews are conducted.

## **LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# REMOVAL OF A TRUSTEE POLICY

Any member of the library board may present a motion to remove another member of the board during a library board meeting. The board member presenting the motion should also present evidence of cause for removal. Valid causes for removal include:

- Failure to uphold the duties of a library board member as stated in the library's policies, bylaws, and mission
- A conviction or guilty plea to any felony or misdemeanor (excluding traffic violations), or any crime involving fraud or misappropriation of funds
- Behavior that is harmful to the library or the library's reputation
- Behavior that constitutes a conflict of interest with the library, without prior approval from the library board

Following the presentation of evidence, the library board will vote whether to begin an investigation of the board member in question. If the vote to begin an investigation is affirmative, the library board will establish a committee of its members to investigate the allegations presented. This committee will prepare a written report of its findings, to be submitted to each member of the library board no more than sixty days after the establishment of the committee. A copy of this report will also be delivered by certified mail to the last known address of the board member under investigation. Any board member currently under investigation is not entitled to attend library board meetings or to vote on motions presented at board meetings.

Within thirty days following the submission of the investigative committee's report, the board member under investigation may notify the library board of their intention to submit a rebuttal. This rebuttal must be submitted within the same thirty day period, and may be submitted in written form, or may be orally presented to the library board in person.

Within thirty days of the rebuttal (or after the thirty day period following the submission of the investigative committee's report, if no response from the board member under investigation is given), the president of the library board

# INTERNAL POLICY // BOARD POLICY

will call a meeting for the purpose of voting on the final removal of the board member under investigation.

If the board member under investigation chooses to resign at any point during these proceedings, no further procedures are needed.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# OPEN MEETINGS POLICY

**The Fort Plain Free Library will abide by the NYS Open Meetings Law (see [Education Law §260-a](#); and [Public Officers Law, Article 7](#)).**

All public and association libraries in New York are subject to the Open Meetings Law (see Education Law §260-a; and Public Officers Law, Article 7).

## **§ 104. Public notice.**

1. Public notice of the time and place of a meeting scheduled at least one week prior thereto shall be given or electronically transmitted to the news media and shall be conspicuously posted in one or more designated public locations at least seventy-two hours before such meeting.
2. Public notice of the time and place of every other meeting shall be given or electronically transmitted, to the extent practicable, to the news media and shall be conspicuously posted in one or more designated public locations at a reasonable time prior thereto.
3. The public notice provided for by this section shall not be construed to require publication as a legal notice.
4. If videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting, the public notice for the meeting shall inform the public that videoconferencing will be used, identify the locations for the meeting, and state that the public has the right to attend the meeting at any of the locations.
5. If a meeting will be streamed live over the internet, the public notice for the meeting shall inform the public of the internet address of the website streaming such meeting.
6. When a public body has the ability to do so, notice of the time and place of a meeting given in accordance with subdivision one or two of this section, shall also be conspicuously posted on the public body's internet website.

In addition, working sessions of the board (even if they are not formal meetings) must be advertised and open if a quorum of the board is expected to attend.

Educational sessions in which the board does not conduct business are exempt from the Open Meetings Law.

Executive sessions are a portion of the open meeting from which the public and the news media may be excluded. They may only be convened for a limited number of specific purposes. Those which usually apply to libraries are:

- Discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation;
- Collective bargaining negotiations pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law (the Taylor Law);
- The medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation;
- The proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value thereof.

## **§ 105. Conduct of executive sessions.**

1. Upon a majority vote of its total membership, taken in an open meeting pursuant to a motion identifying the general area or areas of the subject or subjects to be considered, a public body may conduct an executive session for the below enumerated purposes only, provided, however, that no action by formal vote shall be taken to appropriate public moneys:

- a. matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed;
- b. any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer;
- c. information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed;
- d. discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation;
- e. collective negotiations pursuant to article fourteen of the civil service law;
- f. the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation;

- g. the preparation, grading or administration of examinations; and
- h. the proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value thereof.

2. Attendance at an executive session shall be permitted to any member of the public body and any other persons authorized by the public body.

Attendance at an executive session shall be permitted to any board member and any other persons authorized by the board, which may include the library director, public library system consultant or the library's lawyer. The library director should almost always be invited into an executive session unless the board is discussing a personnel matter related to that person.

The board is permitted to take formal action and vote on any matter in the executive session except for the appropriation of public monies. However, such actions must be detailed in minutes of the executive session.

It is advisable to adjourn from the executive session and return to the regular meeting to vote on any formal action or approve specific resolutions.

Using executive sessions to discuss matters not defined within the law, even if the topic is "uncomfortable" to discuss publicly, is illegal.

*Insofar as board communication between meetings, the Committee on Open Government opines: "There is nothing in the Open Meetings Law that would preclude members of a public body from conferring individually, by telephone, via mail or email. However, a series of communications between individual members or telephone calls among the members which results in a collective decision, a meeting or vote held by means of a telephone conference, by mail or email would in (our) opinion be inconsistent with law."*

Minutes of all board meetings are required by the Open Meetings Law. They, along with financial statements and other official records outlined in the library's record retention policy, should be kept in a secure but accessible place and available to the public upon request. Posting the minutes on the library's website is required by law.

Minutes of a regular session of the board must consist of "a record or summary of all motions, proposals, resolutions, and any other matter formally voted upon and the vote thereon." If a vote was not unanimous, the minutes must reflect how each board member voted on an action. (Public Officers Law §87 [3] [a])

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# MEETING PROCEDURES POLICY

Meetings are typically held twelve times per year at dates and times determined by the board. Meetings shall be open to the public as required by the New York State Open Meetings Law.

The Annual Meeting of the library shall be held at the library in the month of January for the purpose of electing trustees, receiving and considering yearly reports of the Board of Trustees, its officers and committees, and for any other business which may arise.

A trustee or any person over eighteen years of age and a resident of the Fort Plain Central School District may vote at the Annual Meeting.

The Board of Trustees shall have no fewer than four regular meetings a year on a quarterly basis.

Times of regular meetings shall be set and announced at the Annual Meeting. In the event of the change of the date or time of any regularly scheduled meeting, notice of such change shall either be announced at a prior regular meeting of the board or such notice shall be given to the trustees by regular mail, email or personal delivery at least five days before the rescheduled meeting. The schedule of regular meetings shall be posted in the library.

Special meetings may be called by the President or the Executive Committee. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call. Notice of special meetings shall be given to the trustees by regular mail, email, telephone call or personally at least 24 hours in advance of the special meeting. A notice of the special meeting shall be posted in the library.

A majority of the members of the Board of Trustees shall be a quorum at any meeting. In the event that any positions on the Board of Trustees are vacant, a quorum shall be a majority of the positions on the Board of Trustees actually filled.

The director shall forward an agenda to all trustees at least five days before all meetings.

# INTERNAL POLICY // BOARD POLICY

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

## PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library welcomes comments and feedback from members of the public at the monthly meetings of the library board. The dates and times of library board meetings will be posted at least one month in advance on the library's website.

Persons wishing to speak at a library board meeting should arrive by the listed start time, and should notify the board president or presiding officer that they wish to speak. The board president or presiding officer will then review the meeting agenda, and will announce where in the agenda the public comment period will take place. During the public comment period, members of the public will be permitted to speak for a maximum of 5 minutes each.

Patrons wishing to submit written comments to the library board may present said comments to the library director during operating hours, or address their comments to the library by mail. The director will give any public comment received in these ways to the board president or presiding officer at the beginning of the next board meeting. As with spoken comments, the board president or presiding officer will announce where in the agenda the public comment period will take place. During the public comment period, the board president or presiding officer will read written comments aloud.

Public comment is an opportunity for the public to address the board with their concerns and comments, but it is not a time for dialogue or for the board to answer questions directly.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT & ANTI- DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library is an equal opportunity employer, and is committed to providing a non-discriminatory workplace for its employees.

All decisions made at the library regarding employment and personnel actions (including hiring, benefits, promotions, and termination) will be made without regard to race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, qualified mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, marital status, genetic carrier status, military service, or any other category or class protected by law. Any discrimination or harassment on the basis of any of the above categories will not be tolerated.

Any library employee who believes that they or other staff members have been the victim of harassment or discrimination on the basis of any of the above categories should promptly report such incidents to the library director or board. The director and board will review the allegations and may if necessary form a committee of board members for the purposes of investigating the incident. Such a committee will present its findings to the library board no more than thirty days from the date that the allegations are received. The board may take intermediate measures to ensure that further discrimination or harassment does not occur during the investigation period. Whenever possible, the confidentiality of the employee making the allegation will be maintained. Following the review and any investigation period, the board will provide written notice of the outcome of the investigation to the employee making the allegations.

Any library employee found by the review process to have engaged in behavior that violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, potentially including termination of employment.

It is unlawful to retaliate against an employee for filing a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or for participating in the investigation of such a complaint. Employees who believe that they have been retaliated against for these reasons should report such incidents to the library director or board. The

board will investigate incidents of retaliation in the same manner as incidents of discrimination or harassment, as listed above.

Employees who believe that they have been the victim of any form of discrimination also have the option of filing a complaint with the New York State Division of Human Rights (DHR) and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

DHR's central office contact information is: NYS Division of Human Rights, One Fordham Plaza, Fourth Floor, Bronx, New York 10458. You may call (718) 741-8300 or visit: [www.dhr.ny.gov](http://www.dhr.ny.gov).

Contact DHR at (844) 687-3471 or visit [dhr.ny.gov/complaint](http://dhr.ny.gov/complaint) for more information about filing a complaint. The website has a complaint form that can be downloaded, filled out, notarized and mailed to DHR. The website also contains contact information for DHR's regional offices across New York State.

An individual can also file a complaint with the EEOC Public Portal at [publicportal.eeoc.gov](http://publicportal.eeoc.gov).

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# PERSONNEL CODE OF ETHICS POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library recognizes the importance of codifying and making known to the general public the ethical principles guiding the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staff.

To that end, the Fort Plain Free Library hereby adopts and incorporates into the library's policy the following code of ethics, adapted from the American Library Association's code of ethics (Adopted by the ALA Council; latest amendment, January 29, 2021):

The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment. We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

1. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
2. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
3. 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.
4. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
5. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.

6. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
7. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
8. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.
9. We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# COMPUTER & INTERNET POLICY

Fort Plain Free Library staff will abide by all computer and internet use policies as set forth by the Joint Automation Council: <https://jacouncil.sals.edu/10-2/policies/>. The policies listed below are not intended to override or supplant the Joint Automation Council policies, but rather to provide additional guidance and clarity for library staff.

Computer workstations with internet access are provided for library staff for use in the performance of their duties. Staff should note that the library is not responsible for and cannot control content accessible via the internet, and is further not responsible for any consequences of accessing the internet via staff workstations.

While using library computers, staff must abide by all federal, state, and local laws, and well as with any other applicable library policies. Staff must take particular care to never expose confidential patron information when using the internet, in accordance with the Patron Confidentiality policy.

Internet access for personal use while using library workstations is permitted, to the extent that it does not interfere with the duties of library staff. Staff should be aware that no activity conducted on library workstations is private, and may be monitored by the library director, Joint Automation, or other library system staff at any time.

Staff must be aware that information they post on social media is public information, and must exercise discretion in posting any information relevant to the library. Staff must not post any information on social media that might be damaging to the library or its reputation.

Circumvention or disabling of any computer security systems by staff is prohibited.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# HARASSMENT POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library provides a safe, polite, and professional work environment for its employees and volunteers. Harassment, intimidation, or abuse of any kind is not tolerated. This policy applies to all employees, trustees, volunteers, contractors, or other persons conducting business with the Fort Plain Free Library, collectively referred to as "employees" in the remainder of this policy.

Workplace harassment includes actions that create a threatening, intimidating, or offensive work environment. Harassment may take the form of (but is not limited to) physical violence, verbal or written threats, images, pranks, jokes, or unwanted physical contact. Harassment may also include actions or speech directed at employees on the basis of race, religion, gender, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or other categories protected by federal, state, and local law.

Sexual harassment is a form of harassment that includes any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, as well as any harassment directed towards an individual on the basis of their sex, gender, or gender expression. Sexual harassment can include (but is not limited to) physical acts of a sexual nature (including touching, groping, rape, or other unwanted physical contact); sexually explicit speech, gestures, noises, or remarks; the display of explicit or pornographic material in the workplace; or pressure for any unwelcome sexual activities, including by explicit or implicit threats of consequences to an individual.

Sexual harassment also occurs when a person in authority tries to trade job benefits for sexual favors. This can include hiring, promotion, continued employment or any other terms, conditions or privileges of employment. This is called "quid pro quo" harassment.

Employees are encouraged to report any incidents that violate this policy using the Harassment Report Form, regardless of whether they are a target of the harassment in question, or a witness to such an incident. Harassment Report Forms should be submitted to the library director. Harassment reports involving the conduct of the library director should be submitted to the library board.

Upon receiving either a written or a verbal report of harassment, the director or president of the library board will begin an investigation into the incident. In the case of a verbal report, employees will be encouraged to fill out a Harassment Report Form documenting the incident. If the employee declines to do so, the director or board president should fill out a Harassment Report Form based on the employee's verbal account. Investigations will be conducted as swiftly as possible, and will be kept confidential whenever possible. During an investigation, the library director or board president will promptly secure and review any relevant documents (including any relevant digital communications), and interview any relevant persons. The director or board president will maintain a written report of the investigation, which should include a list and summary of any relevant documents, a list of persons interviewed and summaries of said interview, a timeline of events, and a summary of any prior relevant incidents. Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the director or board president will also include in the written report their final determination and a list of corrective actions to be taken. Corrective actions will be implemented as soon as possible. Such actions may include (but are not limited to) formal reprimands, changes of duties or privileges, or termination of employment.

Individuals who have made a report and individuals about whom a report has been made will be promptly notified of the final determination of any investigation. The written report of any investigation should be kept in a secure location within the director's office.

Retaliation against employees for reporting harassment is illegal under federal and state law. Employees who report incidents that they believe to be harassment will never be retaliated against by the library.

Employees who have faced sexual harassment may also choose to file complaints with local, state, and/or federal agencies.

### Legal Protections and External Remedies

Sexual harassment is not only prohibited by the Fort Plain Free Library but is also prohibited by state, federal, and, where applicable, local law.

Aside from the internal process at the Fort Plain Free Library, employees may also choose to pursue legal remedies with the following governmental entities. While a private attorney is not required to file a complaint with a governmental agency, the employee may seek the legal advice of an attorney.

In addition to those outlined below, employees in certain industries may have additional legal protections.

## State Human Rights Law (HRL)

The Human Rights Law (HRL), codified as N.Y. Executive Law, Art. 15, § 290 et seq., applies to all employers in New York State with regard to sexual harassment, and protects employees, paid or unpaid interns and non-employees, regardless of immigration status. A complaint alleging violation of the Human Rights Law may be filed either with the Division of Human Rights (DHR) or in New York State Supreme Court.

Complaints with DHR may be filed any time within one year of the harassment. If an individual did not file at DHR, they can sue directly in state court under the HRL, within three years of the alleged sexual harassment. An individual may not file with DHR if they have already filed a HRL complaint in state court.

Complaining internally to the Fort Plain Free Library does not extend your time to file with DHR or in court. The one year or three years is counted from date of the most recent incident of harassment.

You do not need an attorney to file a complaint with DHR, and there is no cost to file with DHR.

DHR will investigate your complaint and determine whether there is probable cause to believe that sexual harassment has occurred. Probable cause cases are forwarded to a public hearing before an administrative law judge. If sexual harassment is found after a hearing, DHR has the power to award relief, which varies but may include requiring your employer to take action to stop the harassment, or redress the damage caused, including paying of monetary damages, attorney's fees and civil fines.

DHR's central office contact information is: NYS Division of Human Rights, One Fordham Plaza, Fourth Floor, Bronx, New York 10458. You may call (718) 741-8300 or visit: [www.dhr.ny.gov](http://www.dhr.ny.gov).

Contact DHR at (844) 687-3471 or visit [dhr.ny.gov/complaint](http://dhr.ny.gov/complaint) for more information about filing a complaint. The website has a complaint form that can be downloaded, filled out, notarized and mailed to DHR. The website also contains contact information for DHR's regional offices across New York State.

## Civil Rights Act of 1964

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces federal anti-discrimination laws, including Title VII of the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act (codified as 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq.). An individual can file a complaint with the EEOC Public Portal at [publicportal.eeoc.gov](http://publicportal.eeoc.gov).

## Local Protections

Many localities enforce laws protecting individuals from sexual harassment and discrimination. An individual should contact the county, city or town in which they live to find out if such a law exists.

## Contact the Local Police Department

If the harassment involves unwanted physical touching, coerced physical confinement or coerced sex acts, the conduct may constitute a crime. Contact the local police department.

## Training

As per New York State Law\*, the Fort Plain Free Library requires and provides sexual harassment training on an annual basis.

\*Every employer in New York State is required to provide employees with sexual harassment prevention training. The Department of Labor in consultation with the Division of Human Rights has established this model training for employers to use. All employees must complete sexual harassment prevention training at least once per year. This may be based on calendar year or anniversary of each employee's start.

## **LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE POLICY

To promote the best possible working conditions for library staff, a process for addressing grievances in a timely and respectful manner has been established.

## Grievance

This policy pertains exclusively to complaints from library employees arising from actual or perceived violations or infringements of library policies, procedures, or practices as determined and approved by the board of trustees. The board and the library director will not entertain grievances of an anonymous nature. A grievance may be initiated solely by an employee on their own behalf.

The procedures for presenting a formal grievance are as follows:

1. The employee is required to articulate the grievance to the library director or board president verbally within five working days of discovering the issue, or as soon as possible thereafter. Should the library director be consulted, they are responsible for informing the board president. A verbal response will be provided by either the library director or board president within five working days of the initial communication.
2. If the employee is unsatisfied with the verbal response, the grievance must be documented in writing to the library director or board president, clearly marked as "grievance." The written grievance must include the following details:
  - The name and position of the grievant;
  - The date of the incident or alleged violation, if applicable;
  - The issue at hand;
  - A clear and concise statement of the grievance;
  - The specific library policy, procedure, or practice alleged to have been violated or infringed;
  - Any attempts made to informally resolve the issue;
  - The relief sought;

- The signature of the grievant and the date.

3. Upon receipt of the written grievance, the library director may convene a meeting with the employee within five working days and will reach a determination within ten working days of receiving the grievance.
4. If the employee finds the library director or board presidents response to be unsatisfactory, they may escalate the grievance to the entire board of trustees. The employee may request that the original grievance letter submitted to the library director be referred to the board for discussion during the next scheduled board meeting. The board may also seek the employee's presence during an executive session. The board will provide a determination within thirty-five days of receiving the grievance, contingent upon the employee having adhered to the aforementioned procedures.
5. In cases where the grievance pertains to sexual harassment involving the library director, the employee may directly submit their grievance to the board president of the board of trustees. Similarly, if the grievance concerns non-sexual harassment by the library director (including, but not limited to, epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, threatening, intimidating, or hostile actions related to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or disability), the employee may also submit their grievance directly to the board president.
6. Written grievance and all pertinent notes will be kept in a separate file in the library director's office.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library is committed to operating in furtherance of its tax-exempt purposes and in compliance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, including those concerning accounting and auditing, and prohibits fraudulent practices by any of its board members, officers, employees, or volunteers. This policy outlines a procedure for employees to report actions that an employee reasonably believes violates a law, or regulation or that constitutes fraudulent accounting or other practices. This policy applies to any matter which is related to the Fort Plain Free Library's business and does not relate to private acts of an individual not connected to the business of the Fort Plain Free Library.

If an employee has a reasonable belief that an employee or the Fort Plain Free Library has engaged in any action that violates any applicable law, or regulation, including those concerning accounting and auditing, or constitutes a fraudulent practice, the employee is expected to immediately report such information to the library director. If the employee does not feel comfortable reporting to the library director, they are expected to report the information to the board president.

All reports will be followed up promptly, and an investigation conducted. In conducting its investigations, the Fort Plain Free Library will strive to keep the identity of the complaining individual as confidential as possible, while conducting an adequate review and investigation.

The Fort Plain Free Library will not retaliate against an employee in the terms and conditions of employment because that employee:

- Reports to the library director, the board of trustees or to a federal, state or local agency what the employee believes in good faith to be a violation of the law;
- Participates in good faith in any resulting investigation or proceeding, or
- Exercises their rights under any state or federal law(s) or regulation(s) to pursue a claim or take legal action to protect the employee's rights.

# INTERNAL POLICY // PERSONNEL POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library may take disciplinary action (up to and including termination) against an employee who in management's assessment has engaged in retaliatory conduct in violation of this policy.

In addition, the Fort Plain Free Library will not, with the intent to retaliate, take any action harmful to any employee who has provided to law enforcement personnel or a court truthful information relating to the commission or possible commission by the Fort Plain Free Library or any of its employees of a violation of any applicable law or regulation.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

## VOLUNTEERS POLICY

The library welcomes the participation of volunteers from our community, and recognizes that volunteer efforts are essential to the success of the library's mission.

Any patron may volunteer at the library. Volunteers under the age of fourteen must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. Any patrons interested in volunteering must request the opportunity to volunteer by speaking to library staff, who will respond to these requests after conferring with the library director.

The library does not guarantee the availability of opportunities to volunteer, and cannot guarantee volunteers a certain number of hours, any specific schedule, or any specific tasks. The library may terminate its relationship with a volunteer at any time and for any reason, at the discretion of library staff. The library is not obliged to provide any compensation or benefits in exchange for volunteer services.

Staff members will assign tasks to volunteers, and may provide training if necessary. Volunteers should limit their activities to those assigned by library staff, and must not intervene in library operations beyond the scope of these activities. Volunteers are not library employees, and not authorized to speak on behalf of the library. Any questions posed to volunteers by other patrons should be directed to library staff.

Volunteers are not allowed to perform any tasks that might involve exposure to confidential library information, such as patron data or circulation records.

Staff members should avoid assigning volunteers any tasks that might be dangerous or excessively strenuous. Any injuries sustained by volunteers, regardless of how minor, must be immediately reported to the library director. The library director will complete an incident report regarding the injury to keep on file in the library director's office.

Volunteers must abide by the Patron Code of Conduct and all other library policies, and must avoid actions that might be damaging to the library, library property, or the library's reputation. Volunteers are expected to perform assigned tasks to the best of their ability, and respond to suggestions from library staff. Volunteers should notify library staff in the event of changes to their schedule or availability.

### LAST UPDATED:

1.28.2026

TABLE OF  
CONTENTS

INTERNAL  
POLICIES

EXTERNAL  
POLICIES

# WORKPLACE SAFETY POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library is dedicated to fostering and upholding a secure and healthy atmosphere for both the public and its staff members. This includes the prevention of workplace accidents whenever possible, and the prompt response to any work place accidents that may occur.

To fulfill this objective, it is imperative that all library personnel remain vigilant and informed regarding potential health and safety hazards. The library disseminates pertinent information to employees concerning workplace health and safety matters through regular internal communications and staff meetings. Every employee is expected to adhere to safety regulations and exercise caution in all work-related activities. Employees are obligated to promptly report any unsafe conditions to the library director. These reports may be made verbally or in written form to the Library director. Unsafe conditions will be addressed in a timely manner in order to prevent workplace accidents. Those who contravene safety standards, create hazardous or dangerous situations, or neglect to report or address such circumstances may face disciplinary measures, which could include termination.

Any employee involved in an accident that results in injury, regardless of how minor, is required to immediately complete an Incident Report form and notify the library director. Such notifications are essential for legal compliance and for initiating insurance and workers' compensation procedures. No employee who, acting in good faith, reports a safety violation shall face harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment repercussions. Employees who engage in retaliatory actions against individuals reporting violations in good faith will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

TABLE OF  
CONTENTS

INTERNAL  
POLICIES

EXTERNAL  
POLICIES

# INCIDENTS & EMERGENCIES POLICY

Emergency situations are those which require immediate action to preserve the safety of patrons and staff. In an emergency situation, the first priority of library staff will be to prevent injury or loss of human life. The second priority will be to prevent damage to the library building, collections, and equipment.

Emergency situations may cause the library to temporarily close, or otherwise disrupt normal service. In this case, staff will attempt to restore normal service as soon as it is safe to do so. Public notices of interruption and restoration of services will be made on the library's social media. If the building must be evacuated during an emergency situation, staff will inform all patrons present at the library immediately.

Emergency situations should be documented by staff using the Incident Report Form, included below. An Incident Report Form should be filed in any case in which an accident or emergency involving a patron, staff, volunteer, or visitor occurs, as well as any case in which law enforcement is called to the library. Staff should also file an Incident Report Form in any case in which they feel a record of events should be preserved for the library director or board members. All Incident Report Forms should be given to the library director.

## LAST UPDATED:

1.28.2026

# EXTERNAL POLICIES

03

POLICY  
STRUCTURE

Select the title for each policy to jump to specific sections within the policy manual

## CATEGORIES

CIRCULATION      COLLECTION      PUBLIC SPACE      INTERNET & TECH

## INDIVIDUAL POLICIES

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS	COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT	PATRON CODE OF CONDUCT	COMPUTER & INTERNET USE
BORROWING & LENDING	INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM	PROGRAMMING	WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA
SERVICE STANDARDS	LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS	MEETING SPACES	
	FREEDOM TO READ	EXHIBITS & POSTINGS	
	FREEDOM TO VIEW	TUTORING	
	STATEMENT ON CENSORSHIP	PATRON COMPLAINTS	
	CHALLENGE OF MATERIALS	UNATTENDED CHILDREN	
	LOCAL HISTORY	BED BUGS	
	GIFTS & DONATIONS		

# CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library board of trustees recognize patron expectations and rights to privacy and confidentiality as described by the Constitution of the United States of America and New York State. The library's privacy and confidentiality policy is in compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws.

The board recognizes that patron registration and circulation records are confidential. All library staff are advised that patron records are private and shall not be made available to any agency of local, state, or federal governance unless a subpoena, warrant, court order or other official investigative document is issued by a court of law. Information from patron records will not be released except under the conditions outlined in this policy. Any issues or requests relating to confidential patron information will be referred to the library director for review. The library director, after review, will consult with the board of trustees and/or legal counsel, will issue a written decision as to whether to fulfill the request for information.

How Staff should prepare for and respond to judicial subpoenas and warrants:

## Before Any Visit

- Designate the person or persons who will be responsible for handling law enforcement requests. In most circumstances, it should be the library director, and, if available, the library's legal counsel. Prepare a list of these persons, along with contact information, including home or cell phone numbers, for use if they are not present in the library.
- Review the library's confidentiality policy and state confidentiality law with library counsel. Communicate those policies and the requirements of the law to both staff and volunteer workers in the library.
- Train all library workers, including volunteers, on the library's procedure for handling law enforcement requests. They should understand that it is lawful to refer the agent or officer to an administrator in charge of the library, and that they generally do not need to respond immediately to any request.

- A court order may require the removal of a computer workstation or other computer storage device from the library. Have plans in place to address service interruptions and any necessary backups for equipment and software.

## During a Visit

### PROCEDURES FOR LIBRARY WORKERS

If a law enforcement officer requests library records or information about a library user or staff member:

- Ask for the officer's identification.
- Inform the officer that the library director or legal counsel is the individual authorized to respond to requests for records and information, and that library policy requires you to refer the officer to the specified person under your policy.
- Refer the officer to the library director, legal counsel, or to a designated alternate authorized by the library director to respond to requests for records and information. (A list of library employees authorized to respond to records and information requests in the absence of the library director should be available to staff.)

If a law enforcement officer requests library records or information about a library user or worker and neither the library director, legal counsel, nor a designated alternate is present in the library:

- Ask for the officer's identification. Record the information that appears on the identity card.
- Inform the officer that the library director or legal counsel is the individual authorized to respond to requests for records and information, and that library policy requires you to refer the officer to the specified individual.
- Attempt to reach the library director, a designated alternate, or the library's legal counsel using the phone contact list.
- If you cannot reach the library director, legal counsel, or a designated alternate, utilize the procedures outlined below for use by the library director or a designated alternate. Provide a written report describing the officer's inquiry to the library director at the earliest opportunity.

### PROCEDURES FOR THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR OR A DESIGNATED ALTERNATE:

In all cases:

- Ask for the officer's identification. Record the information that appears on the identity card. If possible, verify the information with the local FBI office or the police department.
- Ask a colleague to be present during the interview with the officer. One person should take notes that may be useful if a record of the encounter is needed in the future.

Requests for voluntary assistance or warrantless searches (the officer does not present a subpoena or court order):

- Explain the library's privacy policy, informing the officer that library records and information about library users and library staff are not made available to law enforcement agencies unless a proper court order in good form has been presented to the library.
- Without a court order, neither the FBI nor local law enforcement has authority to compel cooperation with an investigation or require answers to questions, other than the name and address of the person speaking to the agent or officer. If the officer persists, explain that, as good citizens and in conformity with professional ethics, First Amendment freedoms, and state law, the library staff will not respond to informal requests for confidential information in the absence of a court order.
- If the officer claims that an emergency or other circumstance requires the library to turn over records or provide information without a court order, call the library's legal counsel and ask for assistance.
- If the officer employs force to take possession of library records or other library property, do not obstruct the search in any way. Keep a written record describing the incident. Ask any witnesses to the incident to prepare a written record of the interaction between the officer and library employees or volunteers.
- Provide all notes and records to the library's legal counsel. If a library worker or volunteer is required to respond to a voluntary request or a warrantless search in the absence of the library director or a designated alternate, all materials should be turned over to the library director.

If the law enforcement officer presents a subpoena or similar request for records:

- Accept the subpoena. Inform the officer that the library's legal counsel responds to subpoenas on behalf of the library. A subpoena does not require an immediate response from the library.
- Turn the subpoena over to the library's legal counsel. If a library worker accepts service of the subpoena in the absence of the library director or a

designated alternate, the subpoena should be turned over to the library director for coordination with legal counsel.

- The library director will work with the library's legal counsel to respond appropriately to the subpoena. Examine the subpoena for any legal defect, including the manner in which it was served on the library, the breadth of its request, its form, or an insufficient showing of good cause made to a court. If a defect exists, legal counsel will advise on the best method to resist the subpoena.
- Through legal counsel, insist that any defect be cured before records are released and that the subpoena is strictly limited to require release of specifically identified records or documents. If there does not appear to be good cause for the subpoena, or if it seems too broad or intrusive, ask your attorney to file a motion with the issuing court to quash the subpoena in its entirety. Require that the agent, officer, or party requesting the information submit a new subpoena in good form and without defects.
- If you decide to comply with the subpoena after consulting with legal counsel, review the information that may be produced in response to the subpoena before releasing the information. Follow the subpoena strictly and do not provide any information that is not specifically requested in it.
- If disclosure is required, ask the court to enter a protective order (drafted by the library's counsel) keeping the information confidential and limiting its use to the particular case. Ask that access be restricted to those persons working directly on the case.

If the law enforcement officer presents a search warrant:

- Immediately ask the library's legal counsel to provide advice and assistance.
- Unlike a subpoena, a search warrant may be executed immediately. Ask to have library counsel present before the search begins in order to allow library counsel an opportunity to examine the warrant and to ensure that the search conforms to the terms of the warrant.
- If the officer refuses to delay the search, read the warrant and any attached documentation. Verify that it is signed by a judge; is issued by a local, state, or federal court in your state or county; and is current and has not expired. If you have questions about the validity of the warrant, call the issuing court to verify the validity of the warrant or order.
- Identify the items or records specified in the warrant. If the officer will not wait for legal counsel to arrive, you may assist the officer in locating the items or records identified in the search warrant in order to prevent review of other users' records or items not named in the warrant.

- Do not agree to any additional searches, or volunteer information about the items or records in the warrant. Do not sign any documents on behalf of the library without the advice of the library's legal counsel.
- Record and keep an inventory of the records or items seized from the library. Ask if it is possible to provide copies to the officers or to make copies for the library's own records.
- Do not obstruct the search in any way.
- If the law enforcement officials are unwilling to cooperate with you, simply step aside and do not interfere with the officer. Continue your attempts to notify legal counsel, and make every effort to keep a written record of the incident. Ask any witnesses to keep a written record of the interaction between law enforcement officials and library employees and volunteers.
- Request that the officer sign an inventory receipt for the materials with a specific list of all materials seized.
- Provide all notes and records to the library's legal counsel. If a library worker is required to respond to a search warrant in the absence of the library director or a designated alternate, all materials should be turned over to the library director for coordination with legal counsel.

If an agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation presents an order and informs you that the order is issued as part of a terrorism or espionage investigation and is subject to a "nondisclosure order" or "gag order" (FISA court orders or National Security Letters):

- Call the library's legal counsel and ask for assistance.
- Read the order and any attached documentation. If it provides a period of time to respond to the order, respond to the order in the same manner as a subpoena. Except for legal counsel, do not inform other library staff or any other person about the order until authorized to do so by the library's legal counsel.
- If the order requires the immediate surrender of records or other items, respond to the order in the same manner as a search warrant. Ask the agent if he will delay the search until the library's legal counsel arrives.
- If required to turn over records or other items at once, do not notify any library staff except for legal counsel and those staff members necessary for the production of the requested records or other items. (For example, it may be necessary to ask a member of the information technology staff to assist with the production of electronic or computer records.) Instruct all staff members who assist in responding to the order that, with the exception of legal counsel, they cannot inform other library workers or any other person about the order unless authorized to do so by the library's legal counsel.

## Patron Rights & Library Responsibilities

The Fort Plain Free Library promotes the five “Fair Information Practice Principles” as outlined below:

### *Notice & Openness*

We affirm that our library users have the right of “notice,” to be informed about the policies governing the amount and retention of personally identifiable information, and about why that information is necessary for the provision of library services.

In all cases, the Fort Plain Free Library avoids creating unnecessary records, we avoid retaining records not needed for the fulfillment of the library mission, and we do not engage in practices that might place information in public view.

Information we may gather and retain about current and valid library users includes the following:

- User information required to provide library services such as first and last name, address, telephone number and email address.
- Circulation Information such as items currently out, items on hold, holds pending and current fines. Patrons can request that their patron account retains a history of the materials they have checked out.
- Electronic Access Information such as use of the library’s public access computers.

### *Choice & Consent*

The Fort Plain Free Library will not collect or retain private and personally identifiable information without consent. Furthermore, if you consent to give the library your personally identifiable information, we will keep it confidential and will not sell, license, or disclose personal information to any third party without your consent, unless we are compelled to do so under the law or to comply with a court order.

If you wish to receive borrowing privileges, we must obtain information about you in order to provide you with a library account.

### *Access & Participation*

Individuals who use library services that require the function and process of personally identifiable information are entitled to view and/or update their

information. You may update your personal information in person. You may be asked to provide verification as an identification card to ensure verification of identity.

The purpose of accessing and updating your personally identifiable information is to ensure that library operations can function properly. Such functions may include notification of overdue items, recalls, reminders, etc. The library will explain the process of accessing or updating your information so that all personally identifiable information is accurate and up to date.

### *Data Integrity & Security*

- Data Integrity - The data we collect and maintain at the library must be accurate and secure.
- Data Retention - We protect personally identifiable information from unauthorized disclosure once it is no longer needed to manage library services. Information that should be regularly purged or shredded includes personally identifiable information on library registration forms, library resource use and/or material circulation history.

### *Enforcement & Redress*

Our library will not share data on individuals with third parties unless required by law. Library users who have questions, concerns, or complaints about the library's handling of their privacy and confidentiality rights should file written comments with the library director or the board of trustees. We will respond in a timely manner and conduct a privacy investigation or review of policy and procedures.

We authorize only the library director to receive or comply with requests from law enforcement officers; we confer with our legal team before determining the proper response. We will not make library records available to any agency of state, federal or local governance unless a subpoena, warrant, court order or other investigative document is issued by a court of competent jurisdiction that shows good cause and is in proper form. We have trained all library staff and volunteers to refer to any law enforcement inquiries to the library director.

The Fort Plain Free Library ensures patron confidentiality by protecting transaction records and other private information, within the limits of state and federal laws. The New York State Civil Practice Law & Rules Section 4509 states:

“§ 4509. Library records. Library records, which contain names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of public, free association, school, college and university libraries and library systems of this state, including but not limited to records related to the circulation of library materials, computer database searches, interlibrary loan transactions, reference queries, requests for photocopies of library materials, title reserve requests, or the use of audio-visual materials, films or records, shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except that such records may be disclosed to the extent necessary for the proper operation of such library and shall be disclosed upon request or consent of the user or pursuant to subpoena, court order, or where otherwise required by statute.”

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/CVP/4509>

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# BORROWING AND LENDING POLICY

## Who can get a library card? How can they do it? Do cards expire?

Any adult may register for a library card free of charge. To obtain a library card, an applicant must present a current (unexpired) photo ID, one additional proof of address, and a completed library card application form (available at the library circulation desk). Residency is not required.

- Acceptable forms of photo ID include a driver's license or non-driver ID, passport, benefits card, military ID, or other ID card with an associated number.
- Acceptable proofs of address include posted mail addressed to the applicant, as well as pay stubs, utility bills, current driver's license or checks including the applicant's name and address.

Minors (persons under age 18) may register for a library card if accompanied by a parent or guardian. The parent/guardian and minor must both be present to receive a library card. Parents/guardians must present a photo ID and proof of address in their own names when registering a minor for a library card, and will assume responsibility for all items borrowed using the card. Upon turning 18, minors must present a photo ID in their own name, which will replace the parent/guardian's number associated with their account.

Institutions (such as nursing homes or assisted living facilities) may be issued a card in the name of the institution. The institution assumes all responsibilities that would otherwise be assumed by an individual cardholder. An applicant who is applying for an institutional card must provide proof of employment by the institution.

Cards for teachers or educators may be issued in addition to the teacher/educator's personal library card. Teachers/educators assume responsibility for all items borrowed using a teacher/educator card.

In cases where an applicant is unable to provide proof of address, an internet-only card may be issued. Internet-only cards allow patrons to use the library

computers, but not to borrow items. An internet-only card may be converted to a standard card upon proof of address.

Library cards expire every three years. To renew their cards, patrons (persons registered for a library card, or registered as the parent/guardian associated with a minor's library card) must contact the library to confirm their current address and other contact information, at which point the card will be renewed for an additional three years. There is no charge to renew a card, and proof of address is not required to renew if the address associated with the expiring card is confirmed.

### What privileges and responsibilities are associated with a library card?

A library card in good standing allows patrons to borrow items from the Fort Plain Free Library, as well as from other libraries in the Mohawk Valley Library System and Southern Adirondack Library System, and to access the digital collections of the Mohawk Valley, Southern Adirondack, Upper Hudson, and Mid-Hudson library systems. Cards in good standing also allow patrons to use the Fort Plain Free Library's public computers.

- A card in good standing is defined as an unexpired card with total fines or charges of less than five dollars.

Patrons agree to abide by all policies established by the Fort Plain Free Library. Patrons agree to pay fines or charges imposed for the loss or damage of library materials. In the event of a change of name, address, or phone number, patrons are responsible for contacting the library to update their information.

The Fort Plain Free Library is not responsible for any unauthorized use of a library card. Patrons are responsible for contacting the library in the event that their card is lost or stolen.

- In the event of a lost or stolen library card, one replacement card will be issued free of charge. Any additional replacement cards must be purchased from the Fort Plain Free Library for ten dollars each.
- Books, audiobooks, CDs, and magazines owned by the Fort Plain Free Library may be borrowed for a period of three weeks, and may be renewed for an additional three weeks up to two times.
- DVDs owned by the Fort Plain Free Library may be borrowed for a period of one week, and may be renewed for an additional week up to two times. Patrons are limited to five DVDs checked out at one time.

- Items owned by other libraries are available for patrons to borrow through interlibrary loan, or through rotating collections present at the Fort Plain Free Library. Loan periods and renewal policies for items owned by another library, or by the Mohawk Valley Library System or Southern Adirondack Library System, are dictated by those libraries or library systems according to their own policies.
- Patrons are limited to fifty total items checked out at one time. Exceptions may be made for teachers or educators at the library's discretion.
- When borrowing items, patrons must present their library card at the circulation desk. If a patron's library card is unavailable, they may alternatively present a current photo ID.

Patrons assume responsibility for all items borrowed using their library card, or using a minor's library card for whom they are registered parent/guardian.

- Overdue Items: The Fort Plain Free Library will attempt to contact patrons regarding the renewal or return of overdue items. Patrons may opt in to receiving automated email or text message notifications of overdue items, or phone calls from library staff. Regardless of any notifications received or not received, patrons are responsible for returning or renewing overdue items.
- Lost Items: A replacement cost for lost items will be charged to a patron's account when said items have been overdue for three weeks. Patrons are responsible for paying any replacement costs charged to their account.
- Damaged Items: In the case of damaged items, a full or partial replacement cost may be charged to the borrowing patron's account at the discretion of the library or library system owning said items.

## LAST UPDATED:

1.28.2026

# SERVICE STANDARDS POLICY

The library strives to provide a positive experience for all patrons at every moment of their time in the library. The actions and demeanor of library staff while interacting with patrons are an essential part of achieving this goal.

In general, staff will always treat patrons with courtesy, respect, and attentiveness. Staff will greet patrons upon entrance to the library, and will ask how they can be of assistance. Staff will also maintain an awareness of patrons in the library, and will tactfully initiate interactions to ensure that all patron needs are met. All patrons will be treated equally, and all patron requests will be respectfully acknowledged and addressed. In cases where staff members are unable to immediately address patron questions or concerns, they will convey those questions and concerns to the library director as soon as possible, and ask for contact information so that patrons can be promptly notified of any response.

During interactions with patrons, staff will be friendly and pleasant. Staff should give their entire attention to patrons during interactions, and should never indicate verbally or through body language that patron concerns are insignificant or unpleasant. Staff should always prioritize patron needs over other tasks they may be doing. All interactions between staff and library patrons will be considered confidential, and will only be discussed in a professional context. Staff will never share the personal information of library patrons.

Staff should be aware of all library services and policies, and should offer an explanation of these services and policies to patrons upon request. Staff will maintain a pleasant and organized atmosphere in the library by making sure that public spaces are clean and tidy, by ensuring that books and other materials are organized correctly, and by directing patrons to available public spaces as appropriate. Staff will be aware of cases where multiple patrons wish to use library resources (such as computers or meeting spaces) simultaneously, and may politely ask if patrons are willing to relocate to another part of the library. In all cases, staff will be guided by the goals of creating a pleasant experience for patrons while ensuring that all patrons have fair and equitable access to library resources.

In cases where patron behavior has violated the Patron Code of Conduct, staff may ask patrons to leave the library.

## Hours of Operation

The Fort Plain Free Library will be open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 am until 5 pm, Thursday from 10 am until 7 pm, and Saturday from 10 am until 1pm. In the case of inclement weather or emergency situations, the library director may choose to close the library or limit operating hours in accordance with the Inclement Weather and Incidents & Emergencies policies.

The library will be closed on Sundays and all federal holidays. In cases when Christmas and New Year's Day fall on a Sunday, the library will be closed on the following Monday.

## **LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The library collection consists of materials owned by the library for use by library patrons, through borrowing and/or use within the library.

The library designates a portion of its yearly budget to the purchasing of new materials, and may also incorporate materials donated by patrons or institutions into the collection. New materials may be purchased and added to the collection by library staff members, with approval from the library director. When selecting materials for addition to the collection, the following criteria will be considered:

- The interests and needs of library patrons and the Fort Plain community
- The maintenance of a broad and diverse range of materials within the library collection for purposes of education and entertainment, representing a variety of subjects, viewpoints, genres, reading levels, and interests
- The efficient use of library funds and space
- The physical quality of materials
- General popularity and interest level of materials as judged by library staff, which may include factors such as media coverage, reviews from credible sources, and subject matter of local interest

Library patrons may suggest the acquisition of materials for the library's collection. Suggested materials will be considered using the criteria listed above. Acquisition of suggested materials is limited by budget, space, and the overall needs of the library's collection.

The library will periodically withdraw items from the collection in order to provide space for new materials and to maintain the overall quality of the collection. Materials may be withdrawn by library staff members, with approval from the library director. When selecting materials for withdrawal, the following criteria will be considered:

- Physical condition of materials, including damage or wear due to age
- Obsolete or outdated information

# EXTERNAL POLICY // COLLECTION POLICY

- Duplicate materials
- Lack of circulation
- The overall balance and variety of the collection

Materials will not be denied addition to the collection or withdrawn from the collection based solely on any of the following criteria:

- The origin, age, background, sex, gender identity, religion, or political views of an author or creator
- Content of a vulgar or controversial nature
- The endorsement or disapproval of materials by individuals or institutions

Patrons may suggest the withdrawal of materials from the library collection. Final decisions regarding withdrawal of materials will be made by the library director.

All library patrons have an equal right to access collection materials. Library staff will not restrict patron access to items in the collection based solely on any of the criteria listed above. Library staff will attempt to provide accurate and useful recommendations of materials in response to patron questions and requests, and will not limit these recommendations based on their own political or religious beliefs.

The library does not restrict access of collection materials by minors, except in compliance with federal, state, or local laws. Parents/guardians are responsible for the access of collection materials by minors. Library staff do not act as guardians of unattended minors.

The presence of materials within the library collection, or the recommendation of materials in response to patron questions or requests, does not represent an endorsement of the contents of said materials by library staff.

## LAST UPDATED:

1.28.2026

# INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM/ CENSORSHIP POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library welcomes and serves all people in the library. Our materials, resources and services are equally available to all people regardless of their origin, age, background or views without cost or restriction. The library will not censor or restrict access to information or ideas, even they are considered controversial, offensive or objectionable.

We promote and protect freedom of thought, freedom of expression and the freedom to explore new information and ideas. The library promotes the right to explore diverse ideas and opinions without limitations. We respect the right of all people to choose for themselves what to read, watch or listen to. We uphold the right of all people to exercise these freedoms within the library as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

These intellectual freedoms are essential for a healthy democracy and fundamental to the mission of the library. We proudly protect and promote democracy in our community by upholding these freedoms.

Our board of trustees has adopted the American Library Association's (ALA) Library Bill of Rights as part of the library's official Intellectual Freedom/Censorship Policy, which applies to every aspect of the public programs and services we provide.

Our collection evolves over time as we add new materials and remove existing materials. When deciding what materials to add to the collection or remove from the collection, we consider factors such as community interest, positive or negative reviews, timeliness, accuracy, historical significance, audience appropriateness, diversity of viewpoint and more.

Restricting public access to information and ideas is contrary to our professional values, as well as a violation of library policy and the First Amendment. We do not and will not remove, relocate, label, stigmatize or censor books or other materials in our collection due to complaints about their content.

All patrons, regardless of age, have equal access to the books and materials in our collection. The Fort Plain Free Library is committed to facilitating access to

constitutionally-protected information, without censorship or scrutiny. In a democratic society, free and open access to information gives people the resources to participate in the political process and strive towards self-improvement. By collecting, organizing, and disseminating human expression in all its recorded formats, libraries are our society's most visible commitment to free speech, self-education and self-government.

Ultimately, the responsibility for the collection rests with the library board. The responsibility for selection of materials rests with the director, who delegates this task to qualified professional staff. This policy defends the principles of freedom to read, view, or hear.

It is recognized that some materials may be controversial. Selection decisions are not made on the anticipated approval or disapproval, but are made on the merits of the work in relation to the collection and to the needs and interests of the community.

Censorship is a purely individual matter. While we are always ready to help parents and caregivers find engaging, age-appropriate books and other materials for their children, responsibility for the reading, viewing, or listening material of children and adolescents rests with their parent or legal guardian. The library does not stand in loco parentis. The selection of materials intended for use by adults will not be inhibited by the possibility that they are accessible to use by children. No material shall be removed from the collection save under the policy "Challenge to Library Materials."

#### LAST UPDATED:

1.28.2026

# LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community it serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age: reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

## **LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS CONTINUED**

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. Please review the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights. These documents can be found at <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations>.

## **LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT

The Freedom to Read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising critical judgement, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they will favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a large pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by the pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural at a time of accelerated change, yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

## FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT CONTINUED

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience.

The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among

## FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT CONTINUED

conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in

## FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT CONTINUED

life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any expression the prejudgment of a label characterizing it or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they*

*can demonstrate that the answer to a “bad” book is a good one, the answer to a “bad” idea is a good one.*

## **FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT**

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and it deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

## **LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

## FREEDOM TO VIEW STATEMENT

The Freedom to View, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

- I. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
- II. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual.
- III. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
- IV. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
- V. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# STATEMENT ON BOOK CENSORSHIP

## ALA Statement on Book Censorship

The American Library Association opposes widespread efforts to censor books in U.S. schools and libraries

CHICAGO - Due to a dramatic uptick in book challenges and outright removal of books from libraries, ALA's Executive Board and the Boards of Directors for all of ALA's eight divisions have released the following joint statement regarding attempts to remove materials that focus on LGBTQIA+ issues and books by Black authors or that document the Black experience or the experiences of other BIPOC individuals:

*In recent months, a few organizations have advanced the proposition that the voices of the marginalized have no place on library shelves. To this end they have launched campaigns demanding the censorship of books and resources that mirror the lives of those who are gay, queer, or transgender, or that tell the stories of persons who are Black, Indigenous or persons of color. Falsely claiming that these works are subversive, immoral, or worse, these groups induce elected and non-elected officials to abandon constitutional principles, ignore the rule of law, and disregard individual rights to promote government censorship of library collections. Some of these groups even resort to intimidation and threats to achieve their ends, targeting the safety and livelihoods of library workers, educators, and board members who have dedicated themselves to public service, to informing our communities, and educating our youth.*

ALA strongly condemns these acts of censorship and intimidation.

We are committed to defending the constitutional rights of all individuals, of all ages, to use the resources and services of libraries. We champion and defend the freedom to speak, the freedom to publish, and the freedom to read, as promised by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

We stand opposed to censorship and any effort to coerce belief, suppress opinion, or punish those whose expression does not conform to what is deemed to be orthodox in history, politics, or belief. The unfettered

## STATEMENT ON BOOK CENSORSHIP CONTINUES

*exchange of ideas is essential to the preservation of a free and democratic society.*

Libraries manifest the promises of the First Amendment by making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions, and ideas, so that every person has the opportunity to freely read and consider information and ideas regardless of their content or the viewpoint of the author. This requires the professional expertise of librarians who work in partnership with their communities to curate collections that serve the information needs of all their users.

*In 1953, when confronted with comparable threats to our democratic values, the American Library Association issued the Freedom to Read Statement, a declaration in support of freedom to think or believe as one chooses, the freedom to express one's thoughts and beliefs without fear or retaliation, and the right to access information without restriction. ALA's Executive Board, staff, and member leaders reaffirm not only the principles of the Freedom to Read statement but also the daily practices that ensure it continues to inform the profession and that library workers and library trustees have the training, information, tools, and support they need to celebrate and defend their communities' right to read and to learn.*

*With the freedom to read under threat, the ALA, including its Executive Board, Divisions, Roundtables, and other units stand firmly with our members, the entire library community, allied organizations, and all those across this country who choose to exercise their own right to read and access information freely, and we call on others to do the same.*

American Library Association Executive Board  
American Association of School Librarians Board of Directors  
Association of College and Research Libraries Board of Directors  
Association for Library Service to Children Board of Directors  
Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures Board of Directors  
Public Library Association Board of Directors  
Reference and User Services Association Board of Directors  
Young Adult Library Services Association Board of Directors  
United for Libraries Board of Directors Policies

## LAST UPDATED:

1.28.2026

# CHALLENGES TO LIBRARY MATERIALS POLICY

It is the fundamental responsibility of the public library to ensure that all materials, including those that may be deemed controversial, are readily accessible to all patrons. This accessibility may result in the expression of views within certain materials that conflict with the beliefs or preferences of some community members. Establishing a policy to guide library staff and volunteers in responding to community concerns regarding specific materials is critical for ensuring that each complaint is addressed equitably, and that all library personnel are informed on how to proceed.

The Fort Plain Free Library is committed to serving all members of our community by curating a diverse collection that encompasses a wide range of viewpoints. However, it is essential to clarify that the Fort Plain Free Library does not advocate for or endorse any specific idea, opinion, or perspective; nor will the Fort Plain Free Library, its employees, volunteers, or trustees assume the role of *in loco parentis* regarding any library patron, whether adult or minor.

The board of trustees acknowledges the significance of providing a mechanism for the public to express opinions concerning the selection of materials. Any request for reconsideration must be submitted in writing using forms provided by the Fort Plain Free Library. These forms are available upon request at the circulation desk, and once completed, they should be submitted to the circulation desk or mailed to the Fort Plain Free Library, attention: library director. Upon receipt of the signed form, the library director will assemble a committee comprising the president of the board of trustees and two professional librarians who were not involved in the selection of the contested material.

Within two weeks, the committee shall undertake the following actions:

1. Review the material in question, the issues raised, and the relevant circumstances.
2. Decide whether to remove or retain the material in question.
3. Notify the American Library Association and the New York Library Association of any challenges.

The Fort Plain Free Library director will provide a written response via certified mail to the patron within ten days following the committee's decision. Should the patron wish to appeal the decision, they may submit a written request to the president of the board of trustees for a hearing before the board. The board will complete its review of the matter within ninety days and will respond to the patron as promptly as feasible thereafter. Any further appeals must be directed to the Commissioner of Education in Albany, NY.

Requests to reconsider materials, which have previously undergone the reconsideration process, will not be reevaluated unless more than five (5) years have passed since completion of the last review.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library maintains a Local History Collection for the purpose of preserving historical records of Fort Plain and the Mohawk Valley. These records form a resource for library patrons and researchers.

In selecting materials for this collection, the library historian and director will prioritize the inclusion of a broad range of documents reflecting the social, cultural, civic, and economic history of the Fort Plain community. Materials reflecting the history of the Mohawk Valley, surrounding counties, and New York State may also be included if the historian and director judge that they are of sufficient local interest. Priority will be given to materials directly referencing Fort Plain.

Materials that may be prioritized for the collection include:

- Published histories, pamphlets, manuscripts, articles, studies, and other documents relating to the history, buildings, businesses, residents, and organizations of Fort Plain
- Works published by Fort Plain Residents
- Newspapers, magazines, and other publications printed in Fort Plain
- Genealogies and other historical records of prominent local families
- Historical records kept by local businesses, schools, churches, and other community organizations
- Yearbooks from Fort Plain schools
- Maps of Fort Plain and the Mohawk Valley
- Photographs, illustrations, postcards, and other visual documentation of Fort Plain and the Mohawk Valley

In the interest of preserving rare or difficult to replace documents, items in the local history collection may be subject to borrowing restrictions (for instance, they may be available for patrons to examine in the library, but not available to be borrowed). The circulation status of individual items will be determined by the library director. In all cases, efforts will be made to allow patrons access to items in the collection, while ensuring that library materials are preserved for future use.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# GIFTS & DONATIONS POLICY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXTERNAL POLICIES

INTERNAL POLICIES

Gifts and donations by members of the public are an important component of the resources available to the library. The generosity of patrons who choose to donate is always much appreciated.

Donations of books and other materials may be accepted at the discretion of the library director. In general, the library will make an effort to accept donated materials whenever possible, although limited storage space may cause the director to temporarily pause acceptance of these materials. Materials donated to the library should be free of dust, mold, and other debris, and should be in usable condition (e.g., no broken bindings, ripped pages, etc). Library staff may choose to refuse donations of materials that do not meet these guidelines.

Materials donated to the library may be incorporated into the library collection in accordance with the criteria outlined in the Collection Development Policy. Materials may also be sold to benefit the library through book sales, or donated to various organizations. Unless by special arrangement with the library director, materials donated to the library are considered to become library property upon receipt, and may be disposed of at the discretion of the library director. Staff should clearly explain to patrons wishing to donate items the purposes that these items may be used for, including the fact that the items may be sold at book sales or otherwise disposed of in the discretion of the library, and the fact that the items may not be able to be returned to patrons upon request.

Library staff can provide a receipt form listing the type and quantity of donated items upon request. The library is not able to place a monetary value on donated materials. Unless otherwise specified, monetary donations to the library will be used to support the library's operating costs and the purchase of new library materials. Patrons wishing for their monetary donations to be used for a specific purpose, or for the purchase of specific materials, should present their request to the library director. The library will attempt to fulfill these requests whenever possible. In the case that a request cannot be fulfilled due to budget, space, library policy, or other limiting factors, the library director will contact the donor to explain the situation. In these cases, the donated funds will not be spent for other purposes prior to obtaining the donor's approval.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# PATRON CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library maintains a Patron Code of Conduct in order to preserve a considerate, safe, and productive environment for library patrons, and to preserve the functionality of library spaces, equipment, and resources.

All visitors to the library are expected to abide by the Patron Code of Conduct while on library grounds. Failure to do so will result in a verbal warning from library staff. In the case of repeated violations, or of a particularly severe initial violation, library staff may ask patrons to leave the library. Patrons who are repeatedly asked to leave the library as a result of Patron Code of Conduct violations may have their library privileges suspended, at the discretion of the library director.

The Patron Code of Conduct is as follows:

- Patrons are expected to be considerate of those around them and respectful of library property. Disruptive behaviors — including loud conversations or the use of phones and other electronic devices at high volume — are not allowed.
- Patrons must wear appropriate attire so as to maintain a safe and respectful environment for all visitors and staff, including clothing that appropriately covers private areas of the body. Shirt and shoes are required. Underwear does not count as a covering.
- Patrons are expected to maintain a reasonable level of hygiene. Patrons whose odor is disruptive to the experience of other patrons or library staff may be asked to leave the library.
- Children under the age of eight must be supervised while in the library. The library assumes no responsibility for the care of unattended children.
- Patrons must keep any possessions that they bring into the library (phones, backpacks, etc) near their person. The library assumes no responsibility for unattended possessions.
- Service animals are allowed in the library when accompanied by their owners. Service animals are working animals trained to perform tasks for persons with disabilities. Other animals are not allowed in the library, except by special permission from the library director.

- The following behaviors are forbidden in all cases:
  - Any activity which violates federal, state, or local laws
  - Smoking, vaping, the use of alcohol, or the use of any kind of tobacco products
  - Inappropriate behavior from being under the influence, as well as displaying any alcohol, drugs or drug paraphernalia
  - Any type of threat, harassment, physical violence, or other aggressive behavior towards library staff or other patrons
  - Sexual misconduct, such as exposure, touching, verbal comments or unwanted sexual advances to patrons, volunteers, or staff. The viewing of sexually explicit material in the library is prohibited.
  - Any theft or destruction of library property, including the deliberate installation of malicious software on library computers
  - Any attempt to gain access to confidential library records (such as patron phone numbers and addresses, etc)
  - Any inappropriate use of library bathrooms (including shaving, bathing, sexual activity, etc)
  - Accessing staff areas, unless accompanied by a library staff member or given permission by a library staff member
  - Sleeping or lying down on the floor, chairs, or other library furniture.

\*Note: This list is not all inclusive and other behaviors determined inappropriate by library staff may be cause for consequences.

### Consequences of Misconduct

Library staff will apply these rules in a fair and equitable manner for the benefit of all. If any of the information is unclear, please ask a member of the library staff for clarification. Such consequences may include, but are not necessarily limited to, suspension of library privileges.

### Suspension Appeals

Suspension of library privileges for more than one week may be appealed. The appeal will be evaluated by the library director. The appellant may file a final appeal to the library board of trustees if they do not agree with the first appeal decision. A decision from the library board of trustees will be final and no other appeals will be accepted

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# PROGRAMMING POLICY

Part of the Fort Plain Free Library's mission includes hosting public programs and events, for the purpose of providing education, information, and entertainment to our community. All library programs are open to the public and offered free of charge. In some cases, the nature of a program or limited physical space may mean that registration is required to participate in a program.

Programs may be hosted by library staff, or by outside organizations that have obtained permission to do so from the library director. The library does not restrict the ability to host a program based on race, religion, sex, age, or any other characteristics protected by local, state, and federal law. Allowing individual individuals or organizations to host programs at the library does not constitute an endorsement by the library of those individuals or organizations, or of the contents of those programs.

Programs focusing primarily on the sale of products are not permitted. Any products sold at a program (for instance, books sold by an author performing a book reading) must be approved by the library director beforehand, and must not be the primary focus of the event. Programs may not be used to promote or recruit for religious, political, or commercial organizations.

Programs will be promoted in advance by library staff across a variety of media, which may include the library's website, social media, press releases, posters, and/or displays at local businesses and community organizations. Library staff will promote programs in a timely manner, and will attempt to engage as broad an audience as possible by promoting across a diverse range of media and locations. Any promotional materials produced by outside individuals or organizations must be approved by the library director, and must not imply an endorsement by the library of individuals, organizations, or program contents.

## LAST UPDATED:

1.28.2026

TABLE OF  
CONTENTS

EXTERNAL  
POLICIES

INTERNAL  
POLICIES

# MEETING SPACE POLICY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXTERNAL POLICIES

INTERNAL POLICIES

The Fort Plain Free Library maintains several rooms that may be used by community members for meetings, programs, and other events free of charge. Individuals and organizations wishing to use these rooms for events must request to do so, and must have their request approved by the library director. Requests will be considered on a first come, first served basis. The library does not restrict the availability of these rooms based on the opinions or affiliations of the requesting individuals, and will attempt to fulfill all requests conforming to the guidelines below. Requests to use meeting spaces outside of standard library hours will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the library director.

Certain restrictions apply to the use of meeting spaces, as listed below:

- Meeting spaces may not be used for private parties (birthday parties, wedding showers, memorials services, etc).
- Meeting space may not be used for events that would disturb other library patrons or interfere with the work of library staff.
- Individuals and organizations may not charge admission to events held at the library, except with special permission from the library director.
- Sales of books, CDs, or other products at events held at the library are the responsibility of the event organizers, and will not be conducted by the library.
- The library does not store equipment or supplies belonging to outside organizations before or after events. Event organizers are responsible for their own equipment, supplies, and personal effects, including removing said items after events. Event organizers may request time prior to events to ensure that equipment functions properly.
- Meeting spaces must be left clean and undamaged. The library reserves the right to refuse future reservations to individuals and organizations based on mess or damage left after events.
- Library staff members may enter meeting spaces used by outside groups at any time.
- All usual rules of behavior while in the library (as outlined in the Patron Code of Conduct) apply during events. Patrons in violation of the Code of Conduct may be asked to leave the library, regardless of whether they have reserved a meeting space.

LAST UPDATED:

1.28.2026

# EXHIBIT & POSTING POLICY

As a center of community in Fort Plain, the library seeks to provide opportunities for patrons to share information, educational materials, and cultural resources. Opportunities to do so include the library's bulletin board and exhibit spaces; specific policies dictating the usage of each are found below.

In general, the policy for items displayed in the library will follow the guidelines established by the American Library Association (ALA), in that items will not be excluded from display based on the "origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation."

## Bulletin Board

The library maintains bulletin board for the purpose of displaying information about local events, programs, resources, and community information. Individuals and organizations within the library's service area may bring posters, flyers, and other informational documents to the library to be posted on the bulletin board. These materials should be presented to staff at the circulation desk, who will then post the materials on the bulletin board.

Posting materials on the bulletin board does not constitute an endorsement by the library of the contents of said materials, the services or events advertised, or the providing organizations.

The library does not restrict use of the bulletin board based on the beliefs of individuals or organizations. Library staff will make every effort to leave materials on the bulletin board until after the date of advertised events; however, limited space may sometimes necessitate the removal of materials to these dates. In these cases, library staff will remove the oldest materials first.

## Exhibit Spaces

The library maintains various exhibit spaces which may be requested for use by individuals and organizations within the library's service area. Requests to use exhibit spaces must be presented to the library director, who has ultimate discretion over the use of these spaces.

Exhibit spaces may not be used for:

- The promotion of specific religious or political groups, including any candidates running for office
- The promotion of businesses or other for-profit organizations
- Material that is illegal or that promotes illegal activities (as defined by local, state, and federal laws)
- Material that is discriminatory or defamatory

The library does not sell items displayed by patrons, other individuals, or organizations in its exhibit spaces. Prices for items will not be displayed, and library staff will not handle any requests about purchasing displayed items. At the request of persons displaying items in library exhibit spaces, the names and contact information of the persons owning said items may be displayed alongside the exhibit.

The exhibition of items within the library does not constitute an endorsement of the contents of said exhibits, or of the providing individuals or organizations.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

## TUTORING POLICY

Tutors may reserve spaces at the library ahead of time by contacting the library director. The library does not limit access to these spaces on the basis of race, gender, age, or any other categories protected by state and federal law. In the event that a previously reserved space becomes unavailable, library staff will contact the tutor and attempt to make alternate arrangements. Tutors who have not reserved a space ahead of time are welcome to use the library, but must be aware that spaces may not always be available in these cases.

Allowing a tutor to use the library does not constitute an endorsement by the library of that tutor or of their work. Tutors and students must communicate with one another directly; the library will not act as an intermediary between them. Tutors and students must abide by all other library policies, including the Patron Code of Conduct and the Unattended Child Policy.

### LAST UPDATED:

1.28.2026

# PATRON COMPLAINT POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library welcomes feedback from patrons, and recognizes that some of this feedback may be negative. In the case of in-person feedback, staff will listen and respond respectfully to patron complaints, and make efforts to correct the situation or offer a verbal apology whenever appropriate. In the case of repeated verbal complaints, or cases where a resolution of the complaint is not immediately feasible staff will notify the library director.

The library acknowledges that due to limited budget, space, and resources, not all patron requests can be accommodated. In these cases, staff will offer an apology and explanation of the situation to the patron in question, and make an effort to find alternative solutions. In all cases when dealing with complaints, staff will be respectful, attentive, and focused on providing a better patron experience.

Written complaints may be submitted to the library director, who will then present these complaints to the library board at the next board meeting. The library board will provide a written and/or verbal response to all written complaints. A complaint form will be provided to patrons by library staff upon request.

## LAST UPDATED:

1.28.2026

# UNATTENDED CHILDREN & CHILD CONDUCT POLICY

The Fort Plain Free Library encourages children to use its facilities and services. Subject to compliance with library policies, anyone may enter and use the facilities at such time as the library is open. While the library is very concerned for the safety of children in and outside library facilities, library employees cannot function as caregivers or baby sitters. The library is not responsible for any consequences of parents forfeiting their responsibilities.

1. Children eight (8) years of age and younger may not be left unattended in the library. They must be in direct supervision of a parent or other adult when in the library, which means the adult must remain with the child during the entire library visit. Notwithstanding what is set forth above, the library director shall have discretion to modify the age limits on an individual case by case basis where strict enforcement is not required under the circumstances to maintain library decorum.
2. Children ages 9-17 may use the library unattended for a reasonable period of time provided they are able to maintain proper library behavior.
3. Parents are responsible for the conduct of minor children (under 18 years of age) in the library or on library grounds, regardless of whether they are accompanying their child or not.
4. Children must have the telephone numbers of their parent, guardian, or other caretaker so that a responsible person may be contacted to come and pick up the child in case of a health emergency, behavior problem, inclement weather, a power outage, or other special circumstances.
5. Unattended minors who do not abide by library rules and policies, or who exhibit unacceptable behavior, will be asked to leave, and/or call their parents to pick them up.
6. If the library is closing and an unattended child is left at the library without transportation home, library staff will allow the child to call home to remind their parents to pick them up. If the child is unable to contact their parents, library staff will remain no longer than 5 minutes after

closing. At that time, local law authorities will be contacted and the child will be placed in their care.

7. Under no circumstances shall a staff member take responsibility for the care of any age child or drive a child home.
8. Violation of the Unattended Child Policy constitutes grounds for suspension of library privileges.

**LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# BED BUG POLICY

This policy outlines the Fort Plain Free Library protocols for prevention of, and reaction to, potential bed bug situations in its materials and on its premises. The Fort Plain Free Library (hereinafter referred to as the library) actively works toward the prevention and containment of bed bugs and bed bug eggs in all materials, and on library premises. The library ensures its staff is trained in bed bug detection, containment, elimination and prevention, and regularly examines and updates its procedures according to best practices.

The library works proactively to:

- Reduce risk to staff and patrons.
- Monitor library materials and facilities and inspect as prudent to provide a prompt and appropriate response.
- Contract only qualified, accredited, and reputable pest detection and control companies.
- Review related policies and procedures regarding detection, inspections, testing and response levels regularly to ensure they remain consistent with best practices.

## Prevention, Protocol, & Procedures

The library recognizes all patrons and staff have a role to play in controlling bed bugs in our community. All patrons and staff must immediately report any sighting of live or dead bed bugs to the library director.

## Staff Protocol

Staff will routinely inspect all incoming materials, including those returned at the circulation desk, in the book drop and through interlibrary loan delivery, for signs that bed bugs are or have been present. These signs include live or dead bed bugs, bed bug eggs, bed bug nymphs, and feces and spotting associated with bed bugs.

Materials returned to the library with detected presence of live or dead bed bugs will be treated or discarded at the discretion of the library. Any infested

materials being discarded will be handled in an appropriate manner so as not to spread the infestation. Discarded items will be considered as damaged and/or lost items under library policy.

All items identified by library staff as potentially containing live or dead bugs in any stage will be promptly quarantined. In the event the patron is not present when the evidence of bed bugs is discovered, the patron will be notified as soon as reasonably possible. If the material is the property of another library, that library will be contacted in order to ensure a coordinated appropriate response. Items with signs or suspected signs will be promptly placed in a specialized heat treatment system, undergo other treatment that adheres to industry standards and is specifically designed to kill bed bugs, or permanently disposed of.

After treatment, all materials will be re-inspected.

### Patron Protocol

Any materials returned by a patron that show evidence of live or dead bed bugs will result in immediate suspension of library privileges for that patron and for any patrons in the same residence as the original patron. The library will also ensure that other libraries in the Mohawk Valley and Southern Adirondack Library Systems which provide shared borrowing privileges will be notified. Suspended patrons shall not be permitted access to the library building. The suspension shall apply to tangible items only and access to digital collections shall be maintained. The suspension will be lifted after the patron presents written proof from an accredited pest control company that his or her residence has been successfully treated for and eradicated of bed bugs by such company. The documentation from such company must specifically designate the address of the premises treated and provide contact information for any additional follow-up that may be needed.

Library patrons must cease to borrow materials from the library if they are experiencing a bed bug infestation in their residence. In the event that a patron discovers a live or dead bed bug, bed bug eggs, bed bug nymphs, or feces or spotting associated with bed bugs in library materials, the patron must immediately do the following:

- If bed bugs are discovered in materials while inside of the library, leave the materials where they are and inform a staff member of the problem and bring the staff member to the materials.
- If the materials are outside of the library and in the possession of the patron:

1. Place the materials into a sealable plastic bag and seal it securely. It is recommended that the seal be reinforced with tape.
2. Notify the library staff prior to returning the materials to enable the staff to have the opportunity to provide guidance on how to return the item.
3. Pursuant to the direction of the staff, return the sealed materials directly to a staff member and inform the staff member of the problem so that the materials can be examined in the presence of the patron and staff member.
4. Patrons must NOT use the book drop to return materials with or suspected to have evidence of bed bugs.
  - A. Patrons are prohibited from self-treating library materials that are suspected to contain bed bugs, including but not limited to, by microwaving or spraying pesticides.
  - B. Patrons will be held responsible for any damages sustained to library materials during an attempted self-treatment. Successfully eradicating bed bugs requires professional procedures and equipment contracted by the library.

## Right of Appeal

Patrons may appeal a decision to limit or suspend privileges, or the conditions placed on reinstatement, by sending a written appeal to the library board within ten (10) business days of the suspension notice. This appeal shall be delivered to the president of the library board by the library director. The appeal of the suspension shall be reviewed at the next meeting of the library board. The decision of the library board is final.

## **LAST UPDATED:**

1.28.2026

# COMPUTER & INTERNET USE POLICY

The library provides public computers and wi-fi for use by library patrons. Access to these services is provided free of charge. The library reserves the right to limit this access to patrons who have violated any library policies. Access may also be limited to accommodate library events, or to ensure that as many patrons as possible have equal access to library resources.

A library card number is required to log on to the public computers. Patrons who do not have a library card may request a temporary guest card at the library circulation desk. Patrons with accounts not in good standing (for instance, owing replacement costs for damaged or lost library materials in excess of \$5) are not permitted to use the public computers.

The public computers shut down automatically at 5 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, at 7 pm on Thursday, and at 1 pm on Saturday. There is generally no time limit for individual user sessions; however, in the event that multiple patrons are waiting to use the public computers, library staff may temporarily institute a time limit or waiting list. In these cases, patrons using the computers for job applications or other business will be given priority over those using the computers for entertainment.

While using the library computers, patrons must abide by the Patron Code of Conduct. Patrons must be respectful of those around them, and must limit the noise generated by library computers (such as by watching videos, etc). In some cases, staff may ask patrons to mute their computers entirely, or to use headphones. The library does not provide headphones; patrons must supply their own. Using the public computers to access pornographic or other explicit materials is prohibited. Attempting to modify or subvert library software or networks in any way is prohibited. Any prohibited actions or violations of the Patron Code of Conduct may result in the loss of computer privileges.

Upon logging out of the public computers, all information from a user's session is erased (including Internet history, active logins, saved files, etc). Patrons wishing to save files across sessions must do so using their own external USB

flash drives, or using Internet-based solutions. It is not possible to permanently save files on the public computers. The library is not responsible for any loss of files while using the library computers, or for any damage to patrons' USB drives or other equipment due to connecting to library computers.

Internet access is provided on the public computers. The library is not responsible for any materials viewed by patrons on the Internet. While library staff will never share patrons' personal information, patrons must be aware that the privacy of their computer sessions cannot be guaranteed, due to the public nature of the library's spaces and the inherent risks of Internet usage. The library is not responsible for any damages resulting from the usage of the Internet.

The library does not restrict the usage of the library computers to children, including access to the Internet. Parents are responsible for the computer usage of their children.

The library also provides access to wi-fi, which patrons may connect to via their own computers, phones, tablets, and other devices. Because this wi-fi network is public, patrons should be aware that the security of information accessed using this network cannot be guaranteed. The library is not responsible for any damages resulting from use of library wi-fi.

## LAST UPDATED:

1.28.2026

# WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The library maintains various social media pages as a means of advertising library programs and services, as well as providing additional channels of communication with patrons. In some cases, these sites (potentially including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and others) may allow patrons to comment on or otherwise interact with library posts, or to message the library directly. The library welcomes patron participation on its social media pages within the guidelines provided by this policy.

The library's mission to maintain a friendly, welcoming, and inspiring space for our community extends to our social media pages. User generated content on these pages that is disruptive, unlawful, or in violation of library policy may be removed. The library reserves the right to remove any user generated content from its social media pages at any time, at the discretion of library staff.

Comments on library social media posts must be on-topic, and must not be hostile to other users or library staff. Spam, repeated comments, and any comments containing sexual or other explicit materials are prohibited, as are any comments encouraging the violation of any state, federal, or local laws (including copyright law).

The library does not endorse and is not responsible for any social media content other than posts created by library staff and posted to the library's official social media pages. Any user comments, fan pages, or other user generated content does not represent the views of the library.

The library does not accept FOIL requests, legal documentation, or other confidential information via its social media pages.

## LAST UPDATED:

1.28.2026

06

# LIST OF FORMS

Select the title for each form to jump to specific form within the policy manual

01

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW (FOIL) REQUEST**

02

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW (FOIL) REQUEST- APPEAL OF DENIAL**

03

**TRUSTEE EDUCATION**

04

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT**

05

**HARASSMENT REPORT**

06

**EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE**

07

**INCIDENT REPORT**

08

**RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS**

09

**DONATION RECEIPT**

10

**COMPLAINT**



# The Fort Plain Free Library

## FOIL Request

---

### Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Request

**To:** Director, Fort Plain Free Library

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (please print):**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Phone:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Under the Fort Plain Free Library Freedom of Information Law Policy, I hereby request records or portions thereof pertaining to (or containing the following):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Choose one:**

- I am requesting an appointment to inspect the records at the Fort Plain Free Library at no charge.
- I am requesting copies of all records. I understand that the cost is \$0.10 per page for employee-copied records, and \$1.00 per page for the certification of records.

Per its FOIL Policy, the Library endeavors to answer your request within ten days of receipt of your request. We will call or write if there is a problem with your request. Should your request be denied, we will send you a letter explaining why. Denied requests may be appealed to the President of the Board of Trustees, which will respond in writing to all appeal requests.

---

**Space below is for Library Use**

**Date of Decision:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Decision:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Approved**      \_\_\_\_\_ **Denied**

If denied, please state why:

---

---

---

---



The Fort Plain Free Library  
**FOIL Request - Appeal of Denial**

---

**Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Request - Appeal of Denial**

**To: President of the Board Trustees, Fort Plain Free Library**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (please print):**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Phone:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Under the Fort Plain Free Library Freedom of Information Law Policy, I hereby request records or portions thereof pertaining to (or containing the following):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please detail any clarifications regarding reasons given for the previous denial of your request:

---

---

**Choose one:**

- I am requesting an appointment to inspect the records at the Fort Plain Free Library at no charge.
- I am requesting copies of all records. I understand that the cost is \$0.10 per page for employee-copied records, and \$1.00 per page for the certification of records.

Per its FOIL Policy, the Library endeavors to answer your request within ten days of receipt of your request. We will call or write if there is a problem with your request. Should your request be denied, we will send you a letter explaining why.

---

**Space below is for Library Use**

**Date of Decision:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Decision:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Approved**      \_\_\_\_\_ **Denied**

If denied, please state why:

---

---



# The Fort Plain Free Library

## Trustee Education Form

---

Beginning January 1, 2023, each library trustee, elected or appointed, of a board of trustees is required to complete a minimum of two hours of trustee education annually (Education Law 260-D as added by Chapter 468 of the Laws of 2021).

Please use this self-assurance form if a certificate of completion is not available from the approved education activity provider. Please submit this form to the library board president for review and signature. Trustees should retain a copy of the signed form.

I give the following assurance:

I attended the following trustee education activity:

---

Trustee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic/Content: \_\_\_\_\_

Format (e.g. workshop, webinar, online course, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Trustee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# The Fort Plain Free Library

## Conflict of Interest Statement

---

By signing below, members of the Fort Plain Free Library board and key employees of the Fort Plain Free Library indicate that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Fort Plain Free Library's Conflict of Interest Policy. Signers acknowledge the mission of the library and its nonprofit nature, and affirm that library activities should contribute to this mission. Signers will indicate any potential conflicts of interest concerning employees, contractors, or vendors with whom the library does business. A conflict of interest in a financial interest or benefit accruing to the signer, a family member of the signer, or any business substantially controlled by the signer as the result of any relationship or transaction engaged in by the Fort Plain Free Library.

**Individual Completing Form:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Information Concerning Conflicts of interest:**

Please check one of the following statements:

I have no known conflicts of interest concerning employees, vendors, or contractors doing business with the Fort Plain Free Library.

I have the following conflict(s) of interest concerning employees, vendors, or contractors doing business with the Fort Plain Free Library (*please list below*):

---

---

---

---



The Fort Plain Free Library

# Harassment Report Form

**Complainant:**

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

Role at Library: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### **Information about the incident:**

Name of Individual(s) Engaged in Harassment:

Date(s) That Harassment Occurred:

**Please describe the specific incident of harassment (in the case of multiple incidents, describe each separately). Please use specific times and locations if possible, or approximations if not.**

**Use additional pages if necessary.**

**Please list any other individuals who may have witnessed this harassment, including their contact information if possible:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Please list any other individuals who may have experienced similar incidents of harassment:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Have you previously provided information about related incidents? If yes, when and to whom did you provide this information?**

---

---

## Acknowledgement

Signature of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:



# The Fort Plain Free Library

## Employee Grievance Form

---

An employee wishing to make a formal complain of harassment, discrimination, unsafe working conditions, retaliation in response to a previous complaint, or the misapplication of library personnel policies may submit this form to the library director and/or board.

**Employee Name** (*please print*): \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the space below to detail your grievance (*attach memo if more space is needed*):

**Employee Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_



The Fort Plain Free Library  
**Incident Report Form**

### **Information about the person involved in the incident:**

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Check One:  Patron  Employee  Visitor  Volunteer

Phone Numbers: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

## Information about the incident:

Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Police notified: \_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_ N

Location of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Incident: (what happened, how it happened, factors leading to the event, etc.) Be as specific as possible; attaching additional sheets if necessary.**

**Witnesses to the incident, including names, addresses, and phone numbers:**

**Medical treatment provided?**  Yes  No  Refused

Date submitted:

Name of Staff Member Filing Report:

Signature of Staff Member Filing Report:

## Acknowledgement

I have had the opportunity to review the above description of the incident and was given the opportunity to make comments and/or changes.

Name of Patron involved in incident:

Signature of Patron involved in incident:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_



# The Fort Plain Free Library

## Reconsideration of Materials

---

Patrons wishing to request that the library reconsider the presence of particular materials in its collection may submit this form to the library director. The board will review all requests for reconsideration of materials and respond by mail within thirty days. Further guidance on the criteria the that the library uses to select materials for its collection may be found in the library's Collection Development Policy.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title and Author of Material:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the space below to detail your concerns with this material:

---

---

---

---

---

What action are you requesting that the board take in regard to this material?

---

Are there any resources that you would recommend to provide additional viewpoints on this topic?

---

---



# The Fort Plain Free Library

## Donation Receipt Form

---

Thank you for your donation to the Fort Plain Free Library! Your items may be added to our collection, placed in the library book sale, or otherwise disposed of at the discretion of the library. The funds raised from sale of donated items are used to purchase new circulating materials for the library.

Please retain this receipt for your records. Your donation may make you eligible for a federal income tax deduction and a New York tax credit. We regret that we are unable to place a monetary value on your gift.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please use this space to describe the items being donated, including quantity of items if applicable:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# The Fort Plain Free Library

## Complaint Form

---

This form may be submitted to the library director, who will present it to the library board at the next board meeting. We will make every effort to resolve your complaint quickly and fairly. The board will issue a written and/or verbal response to any written complaints.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please use the field below (or an attached sheet if necessary) to detail the nature of your complaint, including the names of any library staff involved, any previous efforts made by you or library staff to resolve the complaint, and any other relevant information: