



Borrowing Policy

Applying for a Library Card

Topsfield Residents

All residents of the Town of Topsfield aged six and older are eligible to receive a library card from the Topsfield Town Library. By applying for a library card, applicants agree to these borrowing policy guidelines. A cardholder is responsible for all materials checked out on their card, including any fines, fees, or charges. Residents of Topsfield are able to apply for a library card in-person at our Circulation Desk or online using the [MVLC eCard registration form](#). Patrons applying in-person at the Circulation Desk must provide proof of Topsfield residency (i.e. driver's license, mail, student ID, paystub).

Temporary Cards for Topsfield Residents

If a patron is unable to show proof of Topsfield residency upon registration, we can issue a local-use only temporary card; patrons will have thirty days to bring proof of residency to the Topsfield Town Library Circulation Desk to convert their card to a full card. Patrons with a temporary card are limited to borrowing three items, and temporary cards cannot be renewed.

Residents of Other Towns in Massachusetts

Resident of Town in the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium (MVLC)

Library card holders in good standing from [any town within the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium](#) (MVLC) can borrow materials from the Topsfield Town Library.

Residents of other towns within the MVLC that do not have an active library account can apply for and receive a library card in-person at the Topsfield Town Library Circulation Desk; however, residents of other towns within the MVLC are encouraged to receive a library card at the library in their town of residence or to apply online using the [MVLC eCard registration form](#) to ensure unfettered access to all e-resources offered by the home library.

Resident of Towns Not in the MVLC

Massachusetts residents of towns outside of the MVLC can apply for a library card in-person at the Topsfield Town Library, or online using the [MVLC eCard registration form](#). In-person applicants must fill out the New Patron Application Form and provide identification (i.e. driver's license, mail, student ID, paystub) at the Circulation Desk for registration.

Living Out of State but Working in Topsfield

The Topsfield Town Library will issue a local-use only library card to those who work in Topsfield but live outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This allows patrons to *only* borrow physical materials from the Topsfield Town Library. Patron must fill out the New Patron Application Form in-person and provide proof of employment in Topsfield and identification to the Circulation Desk for registration.

Decertification Statement

Topsfield Town Library regrettably declines to extend borrowing privileges and library services to Massachusetts public libraries that are not certified, and to residents from Massachusetts communities that do not have certified libraries. [See our decertification statement for more information](#).

Replacement Cards

We will issue Topsfield residents replacements for lost or damaged library cards at no charge.

Borrowing Material and Limits

Unless otherwise noted, there is no limit on the amount of items that can be borrowed from the Topsfield Town Library.

Item	Loan Period	Total Renewals (if eligible)	Notes
Books	3 weeks	2	
"Lucky Day" Book Collection	2 weeks	No renewals	
"Hot Titles" DVD Collection	1 week	No renewals	
Audiobooks/ Playaways	3 weeks	2	
DVDs	1 week	2	
Library of Things items	2 weeks	No renewals	Items can be renewed on a case-by-case basis by asking at the Circulation Desk
Music CDs	3 weeks	2	
Magazines	1 week	2	

Children's Room tablets	1 week	No renewals	Limit of one per family and must be returned to the Children's Room desk
Reference Materials	In library use only		
Newspapers	In library use only		

Renewals

Library material that is eligible for renewal can be renewed twice. Items are not eligible for renewal when another patron has requested the item, the borrowing patron has reached the maximum amount of renewals allowed, or the item type is not eligible for renewal (see above chart).

If eligible, items borrowed from the Topsfield Town Library will automatically renew three days before their due date. Patrons who have an email address on file will receive a notification indicating which items have been renewed.

If a patron has borrowed an item at another library, the Topsfield Town Library honors the renewal policy of that library. Exceptions must be discussed with a staff member. A patron with questions about renewing items may contact the owning library for assistance.

Materials that have been requested from outside of MVLC may have due dates that differ from Topsfield-owned items. It is vital to adhere to these due dates; borrowing privileges with libraries outside of the MVLC are jeopardized if the due dates are not honored. Patrons who do not return these materials on time may lose borrowing privileges.

Questions regarding materials from outside of MVLC may be directed to the Reference department.

Late Fines

The Topsfield Town Library does not charge fines for late or overdue items borrowed at the Topsfield Town Library.

Patrons should be aware that policies at other libraries may differ; patrons may be subject to fines if material was checked out at another library in the MVLC that charges fines for overdue items. The Topsfield Town Library adheres to the policies of other libraries.

Overdue Notices

Notices are sent via email to patrons three days before the due date to remind patrons of material due dates (and if they have been automatically renewed, if eligible). Patrons are encouraged to opt into email notification to receive these notices. Billing notices for the item are mailed to the patron after an item is overdue for 45 days and assumed to be lost.

Emailed Courtesy/Automatic Renewal Notice: Sent via email three days before due date

Emailed Overdue Notice: Sent via email fourteen days after the original due date

Mailed Billing Notice: 45 days after due date

Phone Calls: Staff may do follow-up calls to resolve outstanding issues

Block on Patron Card

Blocks on a patron's card are generated automatically when the patron has \$20 or more of unresolved bills and/or fines. A block may also occur when a patron has twenty overdue items on their card.

A block on a patron's card means that their borrowing privileges are suspended in all MVLC libraries until unresolved bills and/or fines are paid, lost items are returned, or overdue items are returned or renewed (if eligible).

Lost and Damaged Items

An item will be marked as "lost" and billed to the patron's account if it is overdue for more than 45 days. Patrons are charged the full price for each lost item. If the lost item is returned undamaged, the bill is waived and borrowing privileges restored.

If the lost item cannot be located, or a returned item is considered damaged, payment must be collected before the patron's borrowing privileges are restored. The Topsfield Town Library does not accept replacement copies of any items.

Payment for lost and damaged materials can be made at any MVLC library via cash or check, or using a credit or debit card online through your library account (\$5 minimum required to pay using a credit/debit card).

Other MVLC libraries may have different policies for their materials; the Topsfield Town Library adheres to the policies of the library which owns the item.

If a lost Topsfield item is found after payment is made, we cannot issue a refund. Patrons may keep items for which they have paid.

Age Restriction and Library Material

There are no content restrictions on borrowing. Parents, guardians, or caretakers are exclusively responsible for deciding what their child may read, view, or hear. Members of the library staff cannot be expected to act *in loco parentis* in permitting or denying access to any library materials to a patron based on age.

Hold Policy

Patrons can request circulating items from any library in the MVLC for pickup here in Topsfield. Holds can be requested online through the patron's library account, over the phone, or in-person at the Circulation or Reference Desk.

Patrons can opt to receive notifications that requests are ready for pickup via email, SMS/Text Message, or by phone call. We hold materials for patrons for seven calendar days before they move onto the next patron.

Rapid Pickup

Patrons can request [Rapid Pickup](#) for materials available for pickup at the Topsfield Town Library. Rapid pickup can be requested by either calling the library's service desks or emailing ask@topsfieldlibrary.org. Items will be bagged and available for pickup during our hours of operation in the library's vestibule.

Museum Passes

The [Friends of the Topsfield Town Library](#) fund the museum pass program. Passes may be borrowed by any Massachusetts resident with an MVLC Library Card. Reservations may be made up to one month in advance on the library's website, in-person, or by calling the library. Residents of towns outside of the MVLC must register their library card at a library in the consortium first before reserving their pass online.

Date Approved	Reason for update
2007	Policy created
12/8/2015	Updated.
11/14/2018	Updated for new ILS system, added logo, change in museum passes policy, and clarifying statements. Removed reference to signed internet policy.
7/22/2019	Renamed policy, reduce age to 14 to get a card without a parent signature, clarify MVLC, clarify local card, change magazine circulation to one week, clarify non-circulating, clarify card blocks, remove age limit on reserving museum passes.
12/13/22	Policy updated. Edited for clarity.
3/11/25	Added logo. Edited to reflect changes to MVLC Policy made in 2024.