



Library Membership and Borrowing Privileges Policy (School and Public)

August 2025

PUBLIC LIBRARY ACCOUNTS

Any person may have borrowing privileges at the Converse Free Library, regardless of residency.

There is no fee associated with a library account. Nonresidents are expected to abide by the same governing policies as residents and are encouraged to make use of the entire library collection, both physical and electronic. Nonresident accounts expire every 12 months (as opposed to the 36-month renewal period for resident accounts). The Library Director may refuse to grant a nonresident account at their discretion.

Children fourteen years and older may register for independent, public-library borrowing privileges. This account is distinct from the school library account held by Lyme School students. There are no restrictions on the number of materials borrowed by children using a public library account. The library does not act *in loco parentis* (assume the role of parents).

Children thirteen and younger must have parental permission to register for a public library account (see Forms section). The library offers two options for registering young users: individual accounts (“independent child”) and family accounts.

- An independent child account requires the signature of the child’s parent or guardian, and gives the child all the privileges of confidentiality under NH RSA 201-D:11. This means that communications (regarding overdues, reserves, etc.) from the library will be shared with only that child.
- A family account can be created for all or some members of a family. Adults act as guarantors; each individual on the account receives a unique patron number. All account holders are privileged to any information on the account.

PHILOSOPHY OF POLICY, IN REGARD TO LYME SCHOOL STUDENTS

Converse Free Library serves the public and school communities. Its resources span the full spectrum of information and literatures for all ages. This pairing of public and school library services provides an unusually rich collection for Lyme children. It also

poses some unusual issues. The Library supports the Library Bill of Rights and does not serve *in loco parentis* (assume the role of parents), yet it recognizes that the collection contains material which would not be included in a library for elementary school children. In consultation with the Lyme School, the Converse Free Library maintains access to a curated portion of its catalogue designed for school use and available via the Lyme School website.

The expectation is that school-aged children will use the collection as their ages and interests warrant under the supervision of their parents, their classroom teachers, and the school librarian. Parents should know that New Hampshire has one of the strongest library patron confidentiality laws in the country (NH RSA 201-D:11). It applies to all, regardless of age. By law, Converse Free Library staff may not share with parents (or anyone) another person's reading choices, including those of children. By extension, the public Library staff will send all overdue notices and invoices for lost or damaged books directly to the borrower, regardless of age.

SCHOOL LIBRARY ACCOUNTS

All children in the Lyme School will be issued a school (vs. public) library account. Decisions about overdues and renewals will be made at the discretion of the school librarian in consultation with the public library director.

CIRCULATION

All library materials circulate for three weeks. All materials, other than items from Interlibrary Loan, may be renewed a maximum of three times. Interlibrary Loans shall be renewable as allowed by the lending institution. Magazines may be renewed once. Materials that have been placed on hold by another patron may not be renewed. Materials in the Reference, LYME, and SCHOOL collections do not circulate, although exceptions may be made with the permission of a librarian.

INTERLIBRARY LOANS

The Lyme Library recognizes that it cannot own all the materials that its patrons wish to borrow; therefore, the staff makes it a priority to procure, upon request, materials unavailable in our collection through the Interlibrary Loan system. In compliance with the Interlibrary Loan Code, the Library also recognizes that it must reciprocate in lending its books to other libraries.

The Library uses the New Hampshire State Library's Automated Information System (NHAIS) as its first source for requested materials. All materials borrowed within the state of New Hampshire are provided free of charge. Materials borrowed from out of state may incur a charge; Converse Free Library will cover up to \$10.00/item for these

charges. The patron will be advised before the request is officially made, if the cost of an interlibrary loan request exceeds this amount.

OVERDUES

The library does not have overdue fines. If material is overdue and another patron has requested it, staff will contact the borrower and request that it be returned. Borrowers will receive an automated notice at 6 weeks and an invoice (to cover the cost of replacement), signed by the library director, after 10 weeks, since the item will be considered lost at that time. When any patron or family account owes 6 items 10 or more weeks overdue borrowing privileges for the account shall be restricted until the materials are returned or the invoice is paid in full. Notice of the restrictions on borrowing privileges shall be communicated via email. If the account to be restricted is a family account, the members on the account may not open any individual accounts after receiving a notice of restriction. The Overdues Policy may be amended at the discretion of the Library Director, as circumstances warrant.

Revision History

Amended by vote October 2011; May 2018; September 12, 2022, August 4, 2025