



Membership and Circulation

Operational

Purpose

The purpose of the Brantford Public Library's Membership and Circulation Policy is to communicate the requirements and responsibilities of Library membership and borrowing privileges.

The Policy aligns with the Brantford Public Library's Principles & Values:

- We serve our customers with professionalism, respect and knowledge.
- We welcome everyone and strive to reduce barriers to access.
- We encourage curiosity and creativity.
- We work in partnership.
- We support lifelong learning and literacy.

Policy

Section 1: Membership

1. Members of the public may use the Library space and many of its services and programs without a Library membership.
2. The Library offers several ways to access borrowing privileges, so as to make materials widely available while also protecting resources in a responsible manner and in accordance with the *Public Libraries Act*.
3. Applicants can sign up for a library membership either in-person or online.
4. All members and visitors are expected to abide by Brantford Public Library rules and policies, including the *Rules of Conduct*. Membership and borrowing privileges may be suspended for violating library policies.
5. Types of membership:

5.1 Full Membership

Brantford Public Library full memberships are available for free to any person who lives, works, owns property, or owns a business within Brantford. This membership type provides the widest access to facilities, materials, training, technologies, and equipment.

5.2 Digital Membership

Digital memberships allow instant access to online collections and databases. Digital membership is intended to be a convenient first step towards full membership registration. As such, it is available to any person who lives, works, owns property, or owns a business in Brantford. After obtaining a digital membership, full membership registration can be completed by visiting any Brantford Public Library branch in person to provide proof of identification and address.

5.3 Borrowing Agreement Memberships

The Brantford Public Library has reciprocal borrowing agreements with the neighbouring library systems of Six Nations, the County of Brant, and Cambridge, which allow residents of those communities to obtain a Brantford Public Library card free of charge, and vice versa.

The Brantford Public Library has an agreement with Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU), which allows students, staff and faculty to access WLU resources through the Brantford Public Library with a “OneCard.”

Members of the Brantford Public Library may use Wilfrid Laurier University’s physical library collection for free by signing up for a WLU Courtesy Card.

5.4 Internet Membership

Internet cards are available to any member of the public and give access to in-library Internet services only, with no borrowing privileges.

5.5 Temporary Membership

Temporary cards are available for individuals that have limited identification, including individuals awaiting updated identification documents, individuals new to Canada or the area, or individuals living in Brantford for a short period of time. Often, temporary memberships are arranged in partnership with local social service agencies, who are able to assist with identity verification for temporary card holders. Ideally, temporary members will register for full membership when the required identification is received.

Temporary membership allows access to digital collections and limited access to borrowing of physical collections.

5.6 Access Membership

Access cards are available for individuals without a permanent address or access to formal identification.

Access membership allows access to digital collection and minimal access to borrowing of physical collections.

5.7 Non-Resident Membership

Non-residents are individuals living outside the above specified areas or agreements, and choose to purchase an annual membership for a fee of \$40.00/year.

Non-residents who work at a place of employment in Brantford are exempt from the annual membership fee and are entitled to free membership with confirmation of local employment.

5.8 Institution Membership

Institution cards are available for organizations located within Brantford and are intended to provide staff members from those organizations access to the Brantford Public Library's resources and collections. The registered institution assumes responsibility for borrowed items.

5.9 Home Delivery Membership

The Home Delivery Service is available to Brantford residents with health and mobility restrictions that prevent them from visiting the Library. This service requires registration and may have different conditions than a regular member.

Section 2: Accounts

1. All membership information will be managed according to the *Customer Privacy and Access to Information Policy*.
2. Members are responsible for updating information on their accounts, including address, phone number and email address. This information may be used to communicate essential account issues.
3. All accounts should include current contact information for reaching members, i.e., a phone number or email address.
4. Lost or theft of a library card must be reported to a staff member immediately. Members are responsible for all items borrowed on their card until a loss or theft is reported.
5. A fee is charged to replace a lost card.

Section 3: Identification Requirements

1. Identification requirements vary according to membership type and age. For applicants to obtain full borrowing privileges, they must provide acceptable identification, as outlined below.
2. Adults (ages 18 and up)

Two pieces of current and valid identification with the applicant's name must be shown to complete membership registration. At least one of the identification documents must include address information.

Accepted identification to confirm address

Driver's License, Ontario Photo Card, Current Utility or Telephone Bill, Car Ownership, Car Insurance, Legal Document, Government Cheque or Tax Bill, Rent Receipt, School report card

Accepted identification to confirm identity

Credit Card, Employee Card, Student Card, Current Pay Stub, Birth Certificate, Passport, Status Card

3. Youth (ages 13 to 17 AND in Grade 9 or up)

Two pieces of current and valid identification with the applicant's name must be shown to complete membership registration. At least one of the identification sources must include address information.

Identification options listed above for adults will qualify for youth, plus these additional options:

- Parent or legal guardian, with a current Brantford Public Library card is present to confirm the youth's identity and address
- Current letter from a teacher on official school stationery verifying the student's residency in Brantford and current address.

4. Children (ages 0 to 13 AND not yet in Grade 9)

All children's membership applications and cards must be signed by the parent or legal guardian, who will assume responsibility for items borrowed. As such, it is the parent/guardian identification that must be verified, as below.

If both the child and parent/guardian are present:

- Parent or legal guardian, with a current Brantford Public Library card in good standing, is present to confirm the child's identity and address
- If parent/guardian account is expired, they must present name and address identification from above list to ensure accurate records.

If the child is not present:

- Name and address identification is required for the parent/guardian from the above list; AND
- Documentation with the child's name.

5. Temporary Members and Access Members

A minimum of one piece of documentation that verifies identity must be shown to complete membership registration. Identification options listed above for adults will qualify for temporary members and access members, plus these additional options:

- Identification that is expired or no longer valid
- Letter from a social service agency that verifies identity.

Verification of current address through formal identification is not required for these members, however, it is preferable to see it, if documentation does exist.

6. Internet Members

Internet cards can be obtained without identification.

Section 4: Borrowing

1. A valid library card must be presented to borrow library materials.
2. Only the member may use their card to access library services. Consent forms are available for family or friends picking up another person's holds; those materials will be checked out to the person picking up the material and they will retain responsibility.
3. Borrowing limits, loan periods, renewals and holds vary based on format and demand. Current information is listed on the Library's website.
4. Due dates can be found on the check-out receipt, by asking Library staff, or by logging into the online account.
5. Renewals can be done in person, by telephone or online. Some items may qualify for automatic renewal. Some items may not be renewed.
6. Members are responsible for ensuring borrowed items are returned on time and in good condition. A parent/guardian of a child aged 13 years and under accepts responsibility for all items taken out on the child's library card. Individuals who qualify for a Youth membership (aged 13 years and older and in Grade 9 or higher) is responsible for any overdue, lost or damaged items on their card.
7. Some collection items have specific return instructions; these are clearly marked on the items. The customer is responsible for any damage that occurs as a result of improper handling.

8. Brantford Public Library does not charge late fines for overdue library materials. Customers are still responsible for fees accrued by lost and damaged items. Items not returned in a timely manner are assumed lost. Current fees can be found on the Library's website.
9. Borrowing privileges may be suspended once an account passes a certain threshold; a card is considered in good standing if there is less than \$20.00 owing on the account. Payment options are available for customers struggling with payment.
10. Members may be charged replacement and processing costs for lost or damaged items. Items that are significantly overdue are considered lost and customers will be charged replacement fees. If lost items are found and returned in good condition within a 6-month period, replacement fees previously paid may be reimbursed. Reimbursements will not include any additional charges, such as processing or collections fees.
11. The Library will make multiple attempts to inform borrowers of unreturned items and associated fees. Non-receipt of these communications does not nullify the amount owing. Accounts that owe a balance for a long duration may be referred to a collection agency.
12. Physical library items from the Brantford Public Library collection placed on hold are held for 5 days. Interlibrary loan items coming from other libraries can be held up until their due date.
13. Notifications for physical holds are available by telephone, text, and e-mail. Notifications for pre-overdues are available by e-mail and text only. Notifications for overdues are available by e-mail, text, and telephone.
14. For electronic resources on hold, depending on the platform, customers can choose whether digital holds are automatically downloaded or if a notice of availability is sent by email. Hold timelines for electronic resources vary depending on the platforms.
15. All membership types have an expiration date, at which time cardholders will be asked to confirm account information, including address and phone number. Identification may be requested.

History

Supersedes: Membership Policy (2003; Revised 2013)

Background documents, related policies: *Brantford Public Library Rules of Conduct; Brantford Public Library Customer Privacy and Access to Information Policy; Internet Services Policy*

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