



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 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, attends school, owns property, or owns a business within Brantford. Additionally, the

Library recognizes Indigenous members of neighbouring communities, including Six Nations of the Grand River and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, as eligible for full library membership. This membership type provides the widest access to facilities, materials, training, technologies, and equipment.

5.2 Digital Membership

Digital membership allows immediate access to online collections and databases for individuals who are eligible for a full library membership. Digital membership are temporary because they are intended to be a convenient first step toward full membership registration. To maintain ongoing access, verification of eligibility is required. Customers may visit any Brantford Public Library branch to present proof of identification and address in order to obtain a full library membership. Refer to the Library's website for up-to-date details, including information about duration of these temporary memberships and eligibility criteria.

5.3 Borrowing Agreement Membership

The Brantford Public Library maintains reciprocal borrowing agreements with neighbouring library systems, including the County of Brant, Six Nations, and Cambridge public libraries, allowing residents of those communities to obtain a Brantford Public Library card free of charge, and vice versa. Access to digital resources is limited for reciprocal borrowing agreement members.

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. These memberships are temporary to encourage individuals to register for full membership when the required identification is available.

Temporary membership allows access to limited borrowing of four items from the Library's regular physical collections, such as a book or DVD. Special collections and high-value items are excluded.

5.6 Access Membership

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

Access membership allows to limited borrowing of one item from the Library's regular physical collections, such as a book or DVD. Special collections and high-value items are excluded.

5.7 Non-Resident Membership

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

Non-residents who are employed or attend school in Brantford are exempt from the annual membership fee and are eligible for free membership upon verification of local employment or local school enrollment.

5.8 Institution Membership

Institution cards are available to organizations that serve the community of Brantford and are intended to provide their staff members with access to the Brantford Public Library's resources and collections. The registered institution assumes responsibility for all 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.

6. Membership requests that fall outside standard eligibility criteria will be reviewed by management to consider suitable solutions. This includes cases where a customer's identification, address, or residency does not clearly meet established membership categories.

Section 2: Accounts

1. All membership information will be managed according to the *Customer Privacy and Access to Information Policy*.
2. Only one library account is permitted per individual, and accounts must be registered using the member's legal name. Preferred names can also be included.
3. 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 or service issues.
4. All accounts should include current contact information for reaching members, i.e., a phone number or email address.

5. 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.
6. 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 members to designate another person to pick up 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.
4. Many library items can be renewed for extended borrowing times; some items may qualify for auto renewal. Complete information on renewal parameters is available on the Library website. Renewals may be completed in-person, by telephone, or online.
5. Due dates can be found on the check-out receipt, by asking Library staff, or by logging into the online account.
6. Brantford Public Library does not charge late fines for overdue library materials.

7. Members are responsible for ensuring that borrowed items are returned on time and in good condition. 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.
8. Lost items that are returned, in good condition within a 6-month period may be reimbursed for fees previously paid; a receipt is required. Reimbursements will not include any additional charges, such as processing or collections fees. No reimbursements will occur after the 6-month period.
9. After a 6-month period, items marked lost or damaged are removed from our system. It is at the Library's discretion whether items will be accepted back after this time. Considerations are made relating to collection need and relevance.
10. Accounts owing more than \$20.00 are considered in poor standing and borrowing privileges may be suspended. Payment options are available for customers struggling with payment.
11. Borrowing privileges may be temporarily suspended for behaviors that impede fair use of the collections or when materials are exposed to environments where they may become damaged or compromised.
12. Library accounts of parents/guardians are linked with those of the children in their care. A parent/guardian of a child aged 13 years and under assumes responsibility for all items borrowed on the child's library card. Individuals eligible for a Youth membership (aged 13 years and older and in Grade 9 or higher) are responsible for any overdue, lost, or damaged items on their own library card.
13. 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.
14. The Library will make multiple attempts to notify borrowers of unreturned items and any associated fees. It is the member's responsibility to ensure that the Library has accurate contact information. Non-receipt of communications does not relieve the borrower of the amount owing. Accounts that remain unpaid for an extended period may be referred to a collection agency, which will incur an additional \$15 charge and may affect the member's credit score. Members are encouraged to contact the Library to resolve account concerns before matters are referred to collections.
15. 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.
16. The Library makes reasonable efforts to notify members when holds become available. Members may also check their accounts online or contact the Library to check hold status.

17. The Library uses several online platforms to provide access to its collections and services. Members should familiarize themselves with each platform's notification settings, loan periods, and other relevant features.
18. All membership types have an expiration date. At that time, cardholders will be asked to verify their account information, including address and phone number. Identification may be required.

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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