Rutherford Public Library

Circulation Policy

Rutherford Public Library's mission is to provide equal access to information, resources, entertainment, support, and space to members of the Rutherford community. This policy serves to establish guidelines for use of Library collections. Where applicable, the policies stated herein comply with those of the Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS).

LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP

A valid library card from Rutherford or another BCCLS library is required to borrow materials. Borrowers should have their own library account. Accounts are not transferable between patrons, unless otherwise noted in this policy.

All Rutherford residents and property owners are eligible for a free library membership. Types of membership at Rutherford Public Library are as follows:

1. Adult Residents. Individuals over the age of 18 residing in Rutherford are eligible for an Adult account. To open an account, adults may visit the Library with a valid form of identification bearing their Rutherford address. Acceptable forms of ID include a driver's license or other government-issued ID, lease agreement, tax bill, or water or utility bill. Adult residents may begin the application process online at bccls.org but must visit the Library in person with a valid ID in order to receive full membership.

2. Juvenile and Young Adult Residents. Parents/guardians of minors who reside in Rutherford may open an account for their children, providing the parent/guardian can document their own residency in the Borough as if applying for a Resident Adult Card. If there is more than one parent or guardian in the household, both are financially responsible for the materials borrowed and fines incurred by their children. Children who reside in two different households in Rutherford or in another BCCLS town are eligible for an account associated with the parent/guardian who is the head of each of these households. In this case, each parent has separate financial responsibility for the account opened on behalf of the child.

3. Non-Resident Rutherford Property Owners. Adults who own property in Rutherford and their dependents are eligible for a Resident Adult Card or a Resident Juvenile/Young Adult card, respectively. Applicants for this type of card must show proof of ownership, such as a tax bill or mortgage statement. If a Rutherford Property Owner lives in another member town of the Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS) and already has an account, this account must be in good standing in order for the individual to use their Rutherford account to borrow materials.

4. Courtesy Memberships. Individuals who work or attend school in Rutherford but live in a town without a BCCLS library are eligible for a Courtesy Membership. Proof of employment or school enrollment must be provided at the time of registration. Courtesy cardholders may borrow only from Rutherford's collection. Student Courtesy Memberships are valid for one school year, and Courtesy Memberships for adults working in Rutherford are valid for one calendar year. Both memberships are renewable provided that the patron can show proof of continued employment or school enrollment in Rutherford.

5. Faculty Courtesy Memberships. Faculty teaching for and employed by the Rutherford Board of Education are eligible for a Faculty Courtesy Card for classroom use. Faculty courtesy cards are intended for the borrowing of materials to be used in the Rutherford Public Schools. This type of card is not issued for personal use, and in establishing a Faculty Courtesy Card account an individual recognizes that he or she releases the Library from compliance with the confidentiality requirements afforded to other cardholders under N.J.S.A. 18A:73-43.2.

Rutherford Public Library does not offer "Pay Cards" whereby out-of-town residents can purchase Library memberships.

Memberships for Rutherford residents and property owners include borrowing privileges at all 78 BCCLS locations.

With the exception of Courtesy Cards, Library memberships are valid for three years. Upon expiration, patrons must present proof of continued Rutherford residency or property ownership in order to renew their membership.

Replacements for lost cards are available for $3.00 and may be obtained by visiting the Library.

In registering for a Rutherford Public Library membership, patrons agree that they are responsible for all items checked out to their account and/or those of their children. All items borrowed must be returned in good and complete condition. Items not returned or returned damaged will be charged to the borrower's account as explained below. Accounts are automatically blocked under the following conditions, which must be rectified before borrowing privileges can resume:

- Outstanding fines and/or fees total or exceed $10.00.
- Ten or more items are overdue.
- One or more items is at least 45 days overdue.

Rutherford Public Library

BORROWING MATERIALS

Proof of Library membership is required when borrowing materials. Patrons should present their physical card or a digital representation of it at the time of checkout. Alternatively, borrowers may show their driver's license or other government- or school-issued ID in lieu of their card.

Patrons are limited to 50 items checked out to their accounts at any one time.

Loan periods and renewal limits are determined by material type. Renewals, up to their limits, are granted automatically provided that another patron is not waiting for the item. Most of Rutherford Public Library's collection, with the exception of museum passes and the Library of Things, is fine-free. This means that fees are not incurred for late returns of most items. Fees still apply for damaged and lost materials.

Guidelines for each material type are as follows:

Material Type	Loan Period	Renewal Limit	Late Fee
Juvenile Books	4 weeks	2	N/A
Juvenile DVDs	2 weeks	2	N/A
Juvenile CDs	2 weeks	2	N/A
Juvenile Audiobooks	4 weeks	2	N/A
Juvenile Reference	Staff Discretion	0	N/A
Juvenile Periodicals	2 weeks	2	N/A
NEW Adult Books	2 weeks	2	N/A
Adult Books	4 weeks	2	N/A
NEW Adult DVDs	2 weeks	0	N/A
Adult DVDs	2 weeks	2	N/A
Adult CDs	2 weeks	2	N/A
Adult Audiobooks	4 weeks	2	N/A
Adult Reference	Staff Discretion	0	N/A
Adult Periodicals	2 weeks	2	N/A

Young Adult Books	4 weeks	2	N/A
Museum Passes	3 days/2 nights	0	$10/day
Library of Things	2 weeks	0	$10/day* *$20/day for hotspots

While loan periods are consistent across BCCLS members, it is important to note that items borrowed from other libraries are subject to the owning library's fines, if applicable.

Loan periods for digital items vary by service but are specified in their respective apps. Digital materials are returned automatically on their due dates unless renewed by the borrower and do not incur fines.

Museum passes and items from the Library of Things are available only to adult Rutherford cardholders whose accounts are in good standing. Specific policies apply to these items and can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

Patrons wishing to borrow an item that is currently checked out or only available at another BCCLS library may place a hold on the item. Holds may be placed online through the library catalog or BCCLS app. Alternatively, patrons may ask Library staff to place a hold by visiting or calling the front desk. In some cases, RPL may be able to request items not held by a BCCLS library from elsewhere in New Jersey. Interested patrons should speak to the Reference Librarian to take advantage of this service.

Courtesy Card holders may only place holds on items owned by Rutherford.

Patrons are notified through their preferred contact method (email, text message, or phone call) when their requested items have arrived. Items not picked up within four days will be returned to their owning library or given to the next patron waiting. Patrons must present their library card or ID when picking up a hold.

RETURNING ITEMS

Items should be returned on or before their due date. The Library provides a receipt listing each item's due date at the time of checkout. Patrons are encouraged to manage their accounts online at bccls.org or via the BCCLS smartphone app. They may also opt into email and/or text message notifications to be reminded of upcoming due dates, learn when their items have been renewed, and receive warning when their items are overdue. Non-issue of notices or receipts does not release a patron from returning materials on time.

Rutherford items, with the exception of museum passes and materials from the Library of Things, may be returned to any BCCLS library.

Rutherford Public Library provides a book drop on its front plaza, which is emptied throughout the day when the library is open. All items with the exception of materials from the Library of Things may be returned in the book drop. Patrons are responsible for ensuring their items are inserted fully into the book drop. Damage or theft resulting from a patron leaving materials on top of the drop, sticking partially outside of the drop, etc. will be the responsibility of the patron. The book drop is for Library materials only; it may not be used for donations.

Lost items, including items more than 60 days overdue, or items returned damaged will incur replacement costs. Replacement costs are outlined in Appendix C and are consistent with the Default Unit Price established by BCCLS. Items without a Default Unit Price (e.g. museum passes, the Library of Things) are charged according to the replacement cost specified at checkout. Rutherford Public Library does not accept replacement copies of lost or damaged items. Payment is accepted via cash, check, or credit card. If paying for another library's lost or damaged item, payment must be made in the form of a check made out to the owning library or credit card.

Examples of damage that will incur a charge include, but are not limited to:

- Missing or torn cover or pages
- Cracked CD or DVD
- Liquid damage
- Defacement (e.g. writing or highlighting on pages, ink or crayon marks, folded pages, etc.)
- Missing pieces in a multi-piece set

The Library does not offer refunds for lost or damaged item payment. If a patron finds an item that was lost and paid for, they may keep it.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF LIBRARY RECORDS

The Library protects each patron's right to privacy and confidentiality in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:73-43.2.

N.J.S.A. 18A:73-43.2**.** Library records which contain the names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of libraries are confidential and shall not be disclosed except in the following circumstances:

1. The records are necessary for the proper operation of the library;
2. Disclosure is requested by the user; or
3. Disclosure is required pursuant to a subpoena issued by a court or court order.

In order to comply with this law, staff are prohibited to disclose to patrons who are unidentified (e.g., via email or over the phone) certain account details because doing so risks the patrons' confidentiality. However, if a parent/guardian possesses their minor child's library card, staff will honor requests for the disclosure of information related to that card and allow parents to use that card to check out materials for the minor children (and pick up requests for them). In addition, patrons may not pick up materials (e.g., requests) for others, including other adults in their household, without that person's library card since this violates patron confidentiality. Staff members, volunteers and Trustees do not reveal the borrowing history of an individual except under the circumstances outlined by N.J.S.A. 18A:73-43.2.

Approved by the Rutherford Public Library Board of Trustees September 16, 2025