

Distributing, Soliciting, and Posting in the Library

Approved August 2001 as the "Bulletin Boards and Petitions Policy"
Revised Aug. 2003, June 2004, July 2008, July 2009, Aug. 2010, Sept. 2013

The Groton Public Library is a base for community information. The bulletin boards are available for public notices of community interest, as determined by the Circulation Department Head or her designee. The postings should be approved, initialed, and dated by a staff member before they are posted. Once notices are posted, they become library property and will be disposed of when the information is no longer current or at the discretion of the library staff. The size limit for notices is 11x17 inches.

All community notices, newsletters, etc. should be put on the bulletin boards and/or at designated locations. Requests for solicitations by non-profit organizations will be decided by GPL Trustees on an individual basis. No non-library related materials should be placed on, kept at, or distributed from any public service desk or any area of the library other than bulletin boards and designated locations.

The Groton Public Library does not vouch for or endorse any organization, product, service, business, or individual posted on the bulletin board or that leaves material in the designated locations. The library accepts no responsibility for this material and recommends that library users exercise their own judgment, skill, and care with respect to the use of this material.

The Groton Public Library endorses only the sale of tickets and those items whose sale supports the Groton Public Library's programs.

The Groton Public Library does not permit individuals or groups to conduct surveys, actively distribute material, solicit, or petition patrons or staff in the library building. The library protects a user's right to use the library and its resources without being disturbed.

There are two exceptions to "no petitions" according to state and federal law:

1. campaign papers
2. town ballot initiative petitions

Both the United States and Massachusetts Constitutions protect the right to solicit signatures on ballot question petitions/nomination papers in a reasonable and unobtrusive manner in open public areas. This includes the public areas of municipal property.

People soliciting signatures cannot go into individual offices or designated staff areas but can be in areas that are considered "public forums", such as hallways or lobbies. These provisions apply to a person physically collecting signatures. Any such activities should be carried on in a manner so as to not interfere with other library activities.

Nomination papers and other ballot question petitions should not be left unattended in the library as it could be construed as using public funds to support a candidate or position.