



Comsewogue Public Library

Access, Handling and Use of Local History and Archival Collections

The Adult Services Department of Comsewogue Public Library, with the Library Director's oversight, is responsible for providing access to the Library's Local History and Archival Collections.

1. The local history and archive collections of the Library contain unique, irreplaceable, and in many cases fragile materials of historical and cultural significance. The purpose of this policy is to preserve, protect, and ensure the responsible use of these materials while providing appropriate access for research, educational, and historical inquiry.
2. This policy applies to:
 - a. All Local History, Archival, Special Collections, and rare or unique materials
 - b. Library staff, researchers, and members of the public
 - c. Physical and, where applicable, digital archival materials
3. All archival and local history materials are non-circulating and are excluded from general public browsing or self-service access. The Local History and Archival Collections include, and are not limited to:
 - Manuscripts, photographs, maps, ephemera, and newspapers
 - Rare and/or fragile materials
 - Unpublished and/or one-of-a-kind items
 - Donor-restricted materials
 - Materials not available for general circulation, including reference collections
4. Direct physical access to Local History and Archival Collections is limited to **designated library staff** who meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - Formal education or training in archives, library science, museum studies, or records management
 - Job responsibilities that explicitly include archival handling, preservation, or supervised reference services
 - Successful completion of internal training on archival handling and security and risk procedures

Authorized staff are designated by the Library Director (or designee) and internally documented. Access privileges may, at any time, be reviewed, modified, or revoked.

Staff without explicit authorization may not retrieve, handle, or provide unsupervised access to archival materials.

5. The Local History and Archival Collections are non-browsable, and not available for self-serve access. Members of the public may request access for research, educational, or historical purposes, subject to availability and preservation considerations.

All public access must occur:

- By appointment or scheduled request
- In a designated, supervised area
- Under the direct supervision of authorized staff

Researchers may be required to:

- Provide valid identification
 - Complete a *researcher registration form*
 - Agree to handling and use guidelines and restrictions
6. Materials must be handled according to archival best practices.
No food, drink, or personal scanning equipment is permitted.
Clean hands, gloves, or supports may be required for certain materials.

The Library reserves the right to:

- Limit the number of items accessed at one time
- Deny access to materials deemed too fragile or unstable
- Substitute digital or surrogate copies when available

7. Reproduction, Publication and Liability

Permission is required for reproduction, publication, or commercial use.
Copyright and donor restrictions must be observed.

The Library may refuse reproduction request that jeopardize materials preservation.
Privacy considerations and proper attribution must be applied.

8. Archival materials are stored in secure, staff-only areas as well as in secure, public display cases.
Removal of materials from designated spaces is prohibited.
Any damage or loss will be documented, reported, and addressed as stipulated by Library policies and procedures.

9. Failure to comply with this policy may result in one or more of the following:

- Immediate termination of access privileges
- Suspension of future research access
- Further action as determined by Library administration

10. Periodic review of this policy shall be undertaken to ensure that it reflects best practices (including risk management guidance), legal requirements, and Library needs.