

Shh... has left the building

The Boston Public Library is energetic and vibrant, a place where all ages are welcome to participate in a wide variety of activities. Some of these activities may result in laughing children, engaging conversation, or music and spoken word programming in public spaces. We do not have an expectation of silence or quiet in our system.

Central Library in Copley Square

The renovated Johnson building at the Central Library in Copley Square is an active space for connecting and collaborating. Normal volume conversation is allowed, and engagement between visitors and staff is encouraged. In addition, with the Children's Library and Teen Central located on the Johnson building's second floor, the sounds of children and teens will frequently be heard throughout the building. The WGBH News broadcast studio often has guests speaking or performing to an audience in the Newsfeed Café. In addition, music, dance, and spoken word programming will be occasionally scheduled in the public spaces of the Johnson building, and we take every effort to post signs informing people of this type of event in advance.

For those who would like a quiet space, we reserve our beautiful Bates Hall reading room in the McKim building, where conversation is discouraged. In addition, the Washington, Elliot and Boylston Rooms, while not venues for completely silent study, are spaces where conversations should be conducted in hushed tones so as not to disturb others. Many of our visitors also choose to rely on headphones to mask the sounds of surrounding library activity.

Branches

Branches are also thriving active spaces, offering a wealth of programs and events. Given the size and layout of most BPL branches, it may also be difficult to find quiet spots in neighborhood branch libraries. Some branches do have enclosed reading rooms, or enclosed Children's Rooms and others have small study rooms. Please visit <http://www.bpl.org> or call the branch directly to find out if there is a quiet space for study.

Cell phone usage

The Library understands the need to occasionally answer an incoming call via cell phone while you're visiting. We ask that ringers are set on a low volume or on vibrate, and that any conversations via cellphone should be conducted in quiet tones so as not to excessively disturb others in the area. Cellphone conversations should be brief. If a longer conversation is required, it should be moved to the lobby, Courtyard or DeFerrari Hall of the Central Library in Copley Square, or to the lobby of the branch that you are visiting. If you are speaking in a normal voice or louder, you may be asked by a staff person or security to relocate or to end your call. The Library is for everyone, and we must share the space respectfully.

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