



BILLERICA COUNCIL ON AGING

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Billerica Council on Aging

Guidelines for Senior Center Participation

The Billerica Council on Aging (COA) programs and activities are primarily designed for, and targeted to, people aged 60 and older. Others may participate when Director has been consulted and approved such participation. The staff is committed to providing a welcoming atmosphere for all senior citizens who participate in the activities, programs and services at the Senior Center.

The following guidelines have been developed in recognition of the fact that our staff, as trained and qualified, cannot responsibly provide oversight and care for those participants who, due to physical and other limitations, cannot maintain a level of independence whereby their safety can be assured. The Council on Aging will provide whatever accommodations are feasible for such individuals within the scope and limitations of its mission and resources, however, participants are urged to arrange for personal companions if they require special assistance to complete their daily routines, including personal and medical care.

Please note the following guidelines for participation and behavior with respect to attendance at Senior Center programs and activities.

Participants at the Senior Center must:

- I. Provide the staff with the name and telephone number of a person to contact in case of an emergency. If a participant experiences a medical problem while on the premises, it is expected (but not mandatory) that the participant will follow the recommendation of the Senior Center staff or emergency medical personnel with respect to appropriate medical attention.
- II. Take responsibility for their own personal care, including hygiene, toileting, and feeding.
- III. Be responsible for their own personal health and medical care, including the taking of medications, monitoring of special diets, etc. Senior Center staff is not trained or otherwise qualified to provide assistance with medication and other personal health and medical care matters.

- IV. Be reasonably oriented, capable of independent decision-making and capable of planning their own activities, e.g., transportation, lunch, financial transactions, etc.
- V. Avoid causing disturbances or disruptions.
- VI. Show respect for building facilities and personal property of others.
- VII. Use common courtesy interacting with other participants.
- VIII. Not bring animals into the building unless they are needed to assist a disabled person, are legally designated as companions, or are to be used in a training session.
- IX. Not discriminate. The Town of Billerica does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, familial status, sexual orientation or disability, nor will it tolerate such conduct on the behalf of participants in Town- sponsored programs.
- X. Not engage in any lewd or offensive conduct.
- XI. Not steal from another senior (e.g., money, lunch tickets, personal property of other participants and/or property of the Senior Center.)
- XII. Avoid misuse of computers; including banging on the keyboard or using excessive force, misappropriation of hardware or software and attempts to alter the software.
- XIII. Not smoke in the building. Smoking outside the building is permitted.
- XIV. Not use illegal substances on the premises. Participants who are under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs will be escorted from the building and taken home by either their emergency contact person or the police.
- XV. Must be aware of and avoid any conduct proscribed by MGL Chapter 71, Section 37A, which defines, "Bullying" as: "the repeated use by a perpetrator of a written, verbal or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;" This also prohibits creating a hostile environment for others and/or infringing on the rights of other participants and staff.
- XVI. Must respect the policies concerning the use of Senior Center rooms which include arriving and departing at the designated times (per listed sign up) and leaving the room as you found it.
- XVII. Must avoid violence, or threats of violence. Violence is not permitted, and will result in an offending participant being asked to leave. Possible permanent suspension of Senior Center privileges may result.

If any inappropriate behavior is witnessed or reported to staff, the staff member will notify the Director. The Director will exercise discretion to undertake corrective action, as he/she may deem appropriate, e.g., asking the participant to abstain from the inappropriate behavior, or, if necessary, contacting the police, a medical services provider, ambulance or other emergency contact person. The incident will be documented. Repeated violations may result in a participant being asked to leave. Possible permanent suspension of Senior Center privileges may result.

Should a participant experience a mental health episode or condition, but is otherwise capable of conforming his/her conduct to these guidelines, then a reasonable accommodation request will be considered by the Director. In the event that no reasonable accommodation is available to address the situation and to assure the safety and convenience of COA staff and other participants, permanent suspension may result.

If a participant believes that he/she cannot reasonably comply with these guidelines, the COA Director is available to share resources and discuss options. If a participant disagrees with or is aggrieved by any corrective action or determination made by the Director under these Guidelines, he/she may make an appeal, in writing, to the COA Board of Directors within thirty (30) days of the action or determination in dispute. The Town Manager will be notified of the appeal.

Revised by Billerica Council on Aging Board of Directors March 21, 2012