TOWN OF LOS GATOS
LIBRARY BOARD AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: 11/12/2026
ITEM NO: 3

DATE:	May 13, 2026
TO:	Library Board
FROM:	Ryan Baker, Library Director
SUBJECT:	Review Recommended Library Policy on Theft and Vandalism of Library Property

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a motion to approve the draft Theft and Vandalism to Library Property Policy.

REMARKS:

The Library's Theft Policy has not been updated since 2015, and is in need of review. The original 2015 is attached for reference (Attachment 1).

The wording of the new draft policy is recommended as:

Theft, Vandalism, and Damage to Library Property

Town of Los Gatos Library
Library Standard Operating Procedures
Approved by the Library Board: [Date]
Supersedes: Theft Policy, December 1, 2015

PURPOSE

The Library has a responsibility to protect and preserve public property, including library materials, equipment, furnishings, and facilities, to ensure their continued availability for community use. This policy establishes expectations for the proper use of Library property and procedures for addressing theft, vandalism, and intentional damage.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals using Library materials, equipment, facilities, or premises, including materials and equipment borrowed for use outside the Library.

PREPARED BY: Ryan Baker
Library Director

POLICY

The theft, attempted theft, vandalism, intentional damage, destruction, or unauthorized alteration of Library property is prohibited.

Library property includes, but is not limited to, books and other circulating materials, computers and electronic equipment, furniture, fixtures, artwork, signage, and the Library building and grounds.

Prohibited activities include:

1. Removing or attempting to remove Library materials or equipment without proper checkout or authorization.
2. Willfully defacing, mutilating, or damaging Library materials, including marking, tearing, removing pages, altering bindings, or removing security devices.
3. Damaging, defacing, destroying, or altering Library facilities, furniture, equipment, fixtures, or other property without authorization.
4. Tampering with Library computers, technology, security systems, or other equipment in a manner that causes or is intended to cause damage or disruption.
5. Concealing, unlawfully retaining, or intentionally failing to return Library property in violation of applicable law.

Such conduct may constitute a violation of California Penal Code Sections 484, 490.5, or 594, or California Education Code Sections 19910 or 19911, as applicable.

Individuals responsible for theft, vandalism, or intentional damage may be subject to suspension of Library privileges, financial liability for damages, and/or referral to law enforcement, as permitted by law.

PROCEDURES

1. Protection of Library Materials and Property

All circulating Library materials and equipment must be properly checked out before removal from the Library. Library property not designated for circulation may not be removed without staff authorization.

Library materials, furnishings, equipment, and facilities must be used for their intended purposes and treated with reasonable care.

2. Suspected Theft or Vandalism

Library staff who observe or reasonably suspect theft, vandalism, or intentional damage shall take appropriate action consistent with Library procedures and employee safety.

Staff may request that an individual return Library property, discontinue prohibited behavior, or provide an explanation regarding suspected unauthorized removal or damage.

Staff shall not physically confront, pursue, or restrain individuals suspected of theft or vandalism. Any detention or inspection authorized under California law shall be conducted only in accordance with Town-approved procedures and applicable legal requirements.

When circumstances warrant, staff may contact the Los Gatos-Monte Sereno Police Department for assistance or investigation.

3. Documentation and Reporting

Incidents involving suspected theft, vandalism, or intentional damage shall be reported to Library Administration and documented in accordance with established incident-reporting procedures.

Documentation should include the nature of the incident, property affected, available identifying information, estimated damages, and actions taken, as appropriate.

4. Recovery of Damages

Individuals responsible for theft, vandalism, or intentional damage to Library property may be held financially responsible for the reasonable cost of repair or replacement, consistent with applicable law and Town policies.

Charges for lost or damaged circulating materials shall be assessed in accordance with the Library's established borrowing policies.

For damage to facilities, furnishings, equipment, or other noncirculating property, Library Administration may coordinate with appropriate Town departments to determine repair or replacement costs and pursue reimbursement when warranted.

5. Enforcement and Suspension of Privileges

Violations of this policy may result in immediate removal from the Library, suspension of Library privileges, or other appropriate action.

Enforcement, including the duration of any suspension, notification requirements, special considerations for minors, and appeal procedures, shall be governed by the Library's established Rules of Conduct.

6. Referral to Law Enforcement

The Library may report incidents of suspected theft, vandalism, or intentional damage to the Los Gatos-Monte Sereno Police Department.

The decision to pursue criminal investigation or prosecution rests with the appropriate law enforcement and prosecutorial authorities.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2015 Version of the Library Theft Policy