

# Parental Guidelines for Children's Library Card Usage

## Parental Involvement

Parents and legal guardians have the right and responsibility for guiding and monitoring a child's library use. The library provides a range of materials to suit various reading interests and perspectives. **Libraries and their employees do not act on behalf of parents and guardians to monitor, control, or restrict what a child selects for reading, listening, or viewing while in the library or the materials they check out.** We rely on you as parents and guardians to know and approve what library materials and services your children are using.

The Susquehanna County Library follows the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights regarding providing library cards for patrons, which states in Article 5:

"A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The right to use a library includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of library resources, based solely on the chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, emancipatory or other legal status of users violates Article V. This includes minors who do not have a parent or guardian available to sign a library card application or permission slip.

### Card Usage Options for Parents:

1. Minors may be listed as users on a parent/guardian's library card. Anyone listed may check out materials on that card and have full access to all circulation records.
2. The parent/guardian may agree to their minor child receiving a card in the minor's name. The card will be private, and the library will be unable to provide information to anyone except the card holder.
  - a. By granting permission for the minor to have a card in their own name, the parent grants the minor the same privacy protections afforded to every other card holder.
  - b. The parent/guardian has the right to revoke permission for a minor's library card at any point in time and for any reason. When the library is notified of that decision, we will immediately place a block on the minor's card. The block will remain in effect until the parent/guardian informs the library that the block can be removed or the minor turns 18 and requests it, whichever comes first.

\*\*If a minor comes into the library without a parent/guardian and requests a library card, an application will be mailed to the minor's address for parental consent. The minor may then return the application to the library and will receive a card according to the choice of the parent/guardian (option 1 or 2 from above).

**Those who would like to monitor children's library use closely may want to take advantage of some or all of the following strategies:**

- Require that your child share their library card number and PIN with you. This will allow you to log into their account.
- Have your child log in to their library account in your presence.
- Have your child request a receipt when they check out books.

### **Minor's Internet Usage:**

The Internet is an ever-changing global electronic network of computers with very diverse users, materials, and opinions. No central authority oversees this collection of computer networks. The Internet offers access to many valuable local, national, and international sources of information. However, not all sources on the Internet are of equal value. Some Internet resources contain material of a controversial nature, including sexually explicit material. Errors and intentional misinformation may also be found.

### **INTERNET SAFETY POLICY**

The library uses filtering software on computers that access the Internet. However, no filtering software is perfect: some undesirable information (according to the criteria set up in the filter) will get through, and some desirable material will be blocked. Filtering the library computers is in place to restrict access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web, both in their own use and in exposure to what adults are viewing, and to protect library patrons from inadvertent exposure to undesirable material. Viewing of certain materials in the public library may be considered improper in time, place or manner. The Library reserves the right to end an Internet session at any time if it is creating a disturbance. Patrons who find that web pages they need to access are blocked should explain their need to a librarian, who can temporarily suspend the filter.

The Library cannot accept liability for the content, accuracy, or currency of the information found, nor the risk of users encountering controversial, inappropriate, or offensive information. Users should evaluate Internet sources just as they do printed publications, questioning the validity of the information provided.

Direct communication via the Internet (email, chat, Instant Messenger, etc.) cannot be filtered. Chat may not be available on all computers. The Library cannot accept responsibility for the safety and security of minors using email, chat, or instant messaging. Parents should discuss online safety and privacy with their children. All users should be aware of the risks of revealing personal information in any context.

Junk email, or "spam," is a constant problem with email accounts. Spam can contain offensive material. The Library has no control over email received by patrons. Free email accounts like Hotmail provide filters to help users deal with spam.