

Computers located in or near a designated Children's or Young Adult area are filtered to offer a comfortable and safe environment for the children and parents using those areas of the library.

### **Parental Request to Limit a Child's Borrowing Privileges**

While the library supports a parent's desire to restrict a child from reading or viewing certain materials, library staff do not act in place of parents with regard to the selection of library materials. We consider reading, listening, and viewing materials to be individual, private matters. The library believes that full, confidential, and unrestricted access to information is essential for patrons to exercise their constitutional rights. While anyone is free to select or reject materials for themselves or their own minor child(ren), the freedom of others to read or inquire will not be restricted. Only parents and guardians have the right and responsibility to guide and direct the reading, listening and viewing choices of their own minor child(ren.) The library does not stand in the place of parents.

Due to the limits of technology and an inability to guarantee restrictions on a child's borrowing privileges, we are unable to offer parents this option.

Prepared by Laura Gruninger

### **Confidentiality of Minor's Record**

The accounts of New Jersey library patrons of all ages are protected by the NJ Statute,


#### **N.J.S.A. Sec. 18A:73-43.2 Confidentiality of User Records**

Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are entitled to information relating to the use of a minor's card, as this is deemed as essential to the library's operation. However, only the parent(s) or guardian(s) whose signature appears on the registration card will be allowed access to the library account in order to ensure confidentiality of the record. The library will not discuss a minor's account with any person other than the person whose name appears on the back of the registration card and the minor themselves.

If more than one parent or guardian wishes to access a minor child's card, they must individually sign the registration card.

If no parent or guardian signature appears (as in the case with a child 14 years or older who may apply for the card themselves,) the library will not disclose information regarding the account with anyone other than the patron unless that patron authorizes such disclosure, or the parent/guardian signs the registration card assuming responsibility for the account. Verification of relationship will be required. This process must be completed at the branch where the account was first opened.

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## Parent's Guide to Confidentiality of User Records, Materials Selection, and Child Safety

**MERCER COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM**  
Administrative Office:  
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**Brian M. Hughes**  
County Executive

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Director,  
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## **Welcome to the Mercer County Library System!**

We are happy that your child is getting a library card today! We hope that this brochure explaining some of our policies regarding internet use, confidentiality, materials selection, and the supervision of minor children is helpful to you in your future library visits! This brochure is by no means inclusive of all of our policies and services, so please feel free to ask us if you have any questions. A more detailed description of our policies can be found on our website, [www.mcl.org](http://www.mcl.org), or by asking a member of our staff.

### **Our Mission**

*The Mercer County Library System recognizes that access to information empowers individuals with knowledge and opportunity. The Library is committed to providing materials and services that satisfy the educational, information, recreations and cultural needs of our diverse community and strives to encourage a lifelong interest in reading.*

The Mercer County Library System has a tradition of excellence in providing services for all ages, with a special focus on children and their families. The library is dedicated to offering diverse, entertaining, and educational programming.

Materials and services for children and young adults include:

- Creative and educational programming for children of all ages
- Popular fiction books and non-fiction; and reading suggestions
- Movies, music and audio books
- Summer Reading Program
- Picture books, toddler books and early reader collections designed to encourage early literacy
- Story-times and performers
- Homework resources
- Online reference subscription services and databases
- Reference assistance from librarians

### **Safety**

We welcome children in the library and encourage their use of our facilities. Children, their well being and safety, are of great concern to us. All library patrons, including children, are expected to behave appropriately while in the library. Parents, guardians, teachers, and caregivers, not library staff, are responsible for the behavior and supervision of minor children. If the adult is in the library using a computer, attending a meeting or is otherwise engaged, they should plan to leave their children at home or bring a caregiver with them to the library.

### **Children Ages 6 and Under**

Children six years of age and younger may not be left unattended in the Library. They must be in direct supervision of a parent, guardian, or caregiver when in the Library, which means that the adult must remain with the child during the entire Library visit.

Exceptions to this policy occur when a program requires children to attend on their own; however parents or caregivers are still required to remain in the building. At these times, children should be brought to the program and met outside the Activity Room or Meeting Room door at its conclusion.

### **Children Ages 7–13**

Children, aged 7–13 years, should not be left without the presence of a parent, guardian or caregiver somewhere in the library. Children under the age of 14 who are left unattended at closing time will be considered stranded. Staff will wait 20 minutes with the child and then will contact the local police department.

### **Child Internet Safety**

As with all library services, parents and caregivers are responsible for supervising their children's access to the library's materials and resources, including the Internet. The library's public access computers are located in public areas and are shared by users of all ages, backgrounds and sensibilities. Children who use the Internet unsupervised may be exposed to inappropriate or disturbing information and images. Parents are encouraged to discuss the use of the Internet in relation to family values and boundaries with their children and to monitor their children's use of the Internet.