

Fort Lee Public Library

Policy for Children in the Library and Children's Room Guidelines

The Fort Lee Public Library encourages the use of its facilities, materials, services and programs by children, parents and caregivers who work with children. The Library adheres to guidelines established by the American Library Association "Library Bill of Rights." The following policy has been written and defined in order to provide a better understanding of services, to encourage parent/guardian participation, to create a safer educational environment, and to protect ALL children who use the Library's facilities. For the purposes of these policies, "parent" includes an adult caregiver 18 years or older who is responsible for a child.

Unattended children:

The Library is prohibited from functioning as a child care center unless licensed (N.J.S.A. 30:5B-1 to 15). Even a good faith attempt on the part of the Library staff to care for children 12 and younger creates an unnecessary liability for conducting business without a license. It is not the Library's role, nor is it equipped to provide short or long-term child care. Fort Lee Public Library staff cannot be responsible for the safety, care or transport of any Library visitors. Parents/caregivers are responsible for their child's safety in the Library.

To ensure the safety of your child, the Library requires that:

Children ages 6 and younger must remain within eyesight and under direct supervision of a parent/caregiver while visiting any area of the Library.

Children ages 7-9 must have a parent/caregiver present in the Library throughout the child's visit.

Children age 10 and older may visit the Library without parental supervision, if the parent is certain that they are mature enough to follow Library Code of Conduct and observe Library guidelines.

If the staff observes a child 9 or younger who appears to be unattended, an effort will be made to locate the child's parent. If the parent is not in the building, Library staff will attempt to contact the child's parent to pick the child up. If the parent is unavailable to pick up the child or Library staff cannot reach the parent, the Library staff is required to ask Fort Lee Police to attend to the child until a parent arrives. Parents should be aware of Library hours and make arrangements for their children after the Library closes.

The Library works in conjunction with local schools to discourage truancy. Children of school age (through age 16) will not be allowed to enter the Library alone while school is in session. Parents/caregivers who wish to accompany their child to the Library during a regularly scheduled school day may do so, but must stay with the child at all times.

Code of Conduct:

The Library's Code of Conduct was developed to help ensure that all visitors can enjoy peaceful and productive use of the Library. Visitors of all ages are subject to the same rules and consequences. A parent may be notified at the determination of the Library staff, if a child's behavior becomes problematic and/or violates the Code of Conduct. Violations of Library policies may result in further action, including but not limited to being asked to leave the premise, suspension or revocation of Library privileges and/or legal proceedings. Such action will be taken when deemed appropriate by the Library Director on behalf of the Fort Lee Public Library Board of Trustees. The Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

Adults in the Children's Room:

The Fort Lee Public Library has a special responsibility in serving the needs of children in the community. As part of this idea, the Library has set aside space specifically intended for children. The Children's Room is therefore restricted to children 12 and younger and to the adults who accompany them. Adults using the Library for any purpose other than to accompany children or to borrow books on behalf of children will be excluded from this area and directed to use the adult sections of the Library. Children ages 12 and older are encouraged to use the Teen section of the Library.

Adult Attendance at Children's Programs:

Programs for children are restricted to children ages 12 and younger and to the adults who accompany them. Adults wishing to participate in children's programs for any other purpose than to accompany children will be asked to leave the programming area.

Internet Access in the Children's Room:

Non- filtered public use computers are available for use in the Children's Room and limited to children ages 12 and younger. Parents or guardians, not Library staff, are responsible for the information found by children. Because parents may feel that information available through the Internet is not suitable for viewing by the children in their care, supervision is advised. As per the Library's Code of Conduct, if a child is found to be viewing inappropriate material, the Library staff reserves the right to end the session.

Borrowing materials:

The American Library Association's guidelines on equal access state: "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, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V of the Library Bill of Rights."

All children must have a valid Library card in order to borrow materials from the Library. Parents may use their card to borrow materials for their children, but it is suggested that all children obtain their own cards. There is no minimum age for a child to obtain a Fort Lee Library card.

Parents should be aware of what their children are reading and borrowing. Although materials of a mature nature may be labeled, and Library staff is available to guide children with their selections, it is not the responsibility of staff to prevent children from borrowing books, videos or other materials that may be inappropriate for them. Parents are encouraged to visit the Library with their children and take an active role in the selection process. Parents and children should also be familiar with guidelines concerning loan periods, fines and fees. These can be found [here](#).

ADOPTED BY THE FORT LEE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

DATE: DECEMBER 22, 2016