

Attachment B

ACCESS TO LIBRARY PROGRAMS, RESOURCES, AND SERVICES FOR MINORS AN INTERPRETATION OF THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

People of all ages should have access to library resources and services. The American Library Association (ALA) opposes any efforts to restrict access based on age. Policies and procedures that prevent minors from accessing the same resources and services as adults violate the ALA's *Library Bill of Rights*. Libraries and their governing bodies should not use age as a reason to avoid potential objections. Not acquiring materials because minors might access them reduces the credibility of the library and limits access for everyone.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "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 means that people should have free access to services, materials, and facilities. Any restriction based solely on the following criteria violates Article V: age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, or legal status.

Further violations of Article V include setting limits on:

- how old someone must be to get a library card;
- demonstrated skills or abilities required to get a library card (like signing their name);
- how many or what kinds of items minors can check out compared to adults; or
- creating trial periods for library use based on age.

Libraries can make reasonable exceptions to protect the safety of minors or financial liability to the library. Reasonable exceptions may include limiting access to meeting rooms, expensive/rare materials, or high cost circulating items or technology.

Libraries: An American Value states the following: "We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services." Libraries and their governing bodies can't take on the role of parents or act "*in loco parentis*." Examples include:

- setting up computer systems that hide or block certain materials without parental permission;
- limiting which parts of the library or what kinds of books and services minors can use;
- not letting minors check out certain items or making comments about whether materials are appropriate based on assumed age or maturity; and
- using ratings to stop young people from getting certain materials.

There are many resources available for parents/guardians to find information on how a book, resource, or other material aligns with their family's values. Libraries are not responsible for determining the appropriateness of any book, material, or resource for an individual beyond the already existing collection designations. Only parents or guardians should restrict their own children's access to library materials and services.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. This includes minors. Minors have the right to receive information from the library in multiple forms, such as print, sound, image, data, social media, online applications, games, technologies, programming, and other formats.

The right to privacy is fundamental to the freedom to read. Article VII of the *ALA Library Bill of Rights* states, "All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use." Minors also have the right to use the library without being watched or monitored.

Libraries and their governing bodies have a legal and professional obligation to provide free and equitable access to a diverse range of library resources and services that is inclusive, regardless of content, approach, or format to everyone in their community equally, including minors. Public libraries must provide resources and services to meet the diverse interests and informational needs of everyone in their community. This means:

- offering services, materials, and spaces that work for all community members, no matter their age;
- curating developmentally appropriate collections;
- understanding that people need different things at different stages of their lives; and
- not making decisions about what's appropriate for each person individually.

Libraries cannot censor constitutionally protected speech to protect minors from ideas or images lawmakers deem unsuitable. Denying access to information to anyone, including minors, can be harmful. Libraries and their governing bodies must uphold this principle to protect the rights to intellectual freedom and the freedom to read for people of all ages.

(Adopted 28 June 1989, by the ALA Council; the quotation from *Free Access to Libraries for Minors* was changed after Council adopted the July 3, 1991, and the June 30, 2004, revision of that *Interpretation*; amended June 30, 2004, July 2, 2008 (under previous name "Free Access to Libraries for Minors"); July 1, 2014; June 25, 2019; and May 29, 2025 by the ALA Council.)

Adopted by the West Bloomfield Township Public Library Board of Trustees on July 14, 1993, revised September 8, 2004; revised March 16, 2022; revised July 8, 2026.