



Policy 4.3 Library Use by Youth

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees: 3/26/15

The purpose of this policy is to document library policies and practices pertinent to youth services.

I. Access by Children and Young Adults

NOLS offers a wide variety of resources to meet the diverse information needs, interests, and beliefs of the community, and to fulfill the needs and interests of Library customers at different stages in their personal development. The Library is committed to providing Library customers with free and equitable access to the entire range of Library resources. The needs and interests of each Library customer, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined by each individual.

With the exception of Internet use (see Policy 4.5), the Library does not place restrictions on the use of library resources based on age. In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), youth under age 17 are limited to filtered Internet access on Library computers and electronic devices.

The Library affirms the rights and responsibilities of parents or guardians to guide and direct the library use of their own minor child and determine which resources will best fulfill their needs. NOLS maintains that parents/guardians--and only parents/guardians--have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their own children--and only their own children--to library resources. Parents or legal guardians who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials or facilities, should so advise their children.

Library staff cannot assume the role of parents/guardians or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent/guardian and child. The Library cannot determine which resources will best fulfill the needs and interests of any individual based on chronological age or level of education.

The Library provides resources to assist parents/guardians in guiding their child's use of the library.

2. Confidentiality of Youth Records and Information

In accordance with Policy 5.1: Confidentiality of Patron Information, NOLS is committed to safeguarding access to all patron records, regardless of the age of the patron. Staff are not able to provide confidential information about children's library records to parents/guardians without the child's consent. In accordance with policy 3.2: Borrowing Privileges and

Responsibilities, parents or caregivers wishing to gain access to their child's patron record may do so by meeting any of the following requirements:

- Possession of the child's library card
- Possession of the child's library card number or username and password
- Presence and approval of the child

3. Use of Library's Youth Services Areas

NOLS provides specialized areas within Library facilities to meet the needs of children and young adults. These areas house specialized collections and resources, and are designed to promote and facilitate library use by children and their caregivers, and by young adults.

Patrons not included in these categories may be required to leave the children's or young adult departments and instead use other areas of the Library.

4. Children Alone in the Library

The North Olympic Library welcomes children to the library. Staff members are available to help children with library materials or services. While the library desires to provide a safe and appropriate environment for visitors of all ages, it is not the function of the library to be responsible for unattended minor children.

Responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of children using the library rests with the parent (or guardian, or care giver assigned by the parent), and not with library staff. The library is a public building and parents/guardians should exercise judgment in deciding whether to leave a child unattended in such a public facility. NOLS strongly recommends that children not be left unattended in any library facility.

Children, either attended or unattended, are expected to abide by the same rules of conduct as all library patrons (see Policy 4.1), and may be asked to leave the library if their behavior is inappropriate. If library staff are unable to locate a parent or guardian to assist with enforcement of Policy 4.1, or to ensure the safety of an unattended child, staff may need to contact authorities, such as the police or sheriff. Standard library procedures and guidelines will be followed in assisting or removing children who are left in the library unattended.