

Library Card Issuance Policy

Adopted 10/8/2013

Revised 9/14/2021

The Russell County Public Library accepts the American Library Association Equity of Access statement. Equity of access means that all people have the information they need, regardless of age, education, ethnicity, language, income, physical limitations, or geographic barriers. It means that they are able to obtain information in a variety of formats – electronic as well as print. It also means that they are free to exercise their right to know without fear of censorship or reprisal.

Equally, the Library strives to provide a safe environment that is free of disruption for all library users. The Library has an approved Library Use Guidelines policy and employs web filters and collection designations based on broad age populations in an effort to provide guidance for users who desire boundary markers. In all cases, the Library cannot and does not accept responsibility for what a user accesses or borrows. In particular, the Library encourages parents and caregivers to consider the safety and well-being of their children and places all responsibility for what a child accesses or borrows on the parent.

Borrower Types and Access

The Russell County Public Library gives primary access to users through issuance of a library card without restriction on age, education, ethnicity, language, income, physical limitations, or geographic barriers and at no cost. Primary access includes full allowances of time on Library's public computers and borrowing physical and digital resources to the full limit of maximum checkouts and loan periods. In some cases, the Library alters access to meet the needs of certain borrowers, including Independent Youth, Student Digital, and Outreach Borrowers, and Guests of the Library. Overdue fines and fees for damaged or lost materials apply to all borrowers.

Adult Borrowers

Individuals age 18 or older who are physically present and can provide photo identification are eligible to apply for a Russell County Public Library card. A completed library card application is required for a card to be issued. The application must be signed, signifying a willingness to assume financial responsibility for all materials accessed or borrowed on the card.

Youth Borrowers

Parents or caregivers who possess a Russell County Public Library card are eligible to apply for a library card for their child from birth through age 17. The child must be physically present, and a completed library card application is required for a card to be issued. The parent must also

sign the child's application, signifying a willingness to assume financial responsibility for all materials accessed or borrowed on the child's card.

Independent Youth Borrowers

The Russell County Public Library encourages youth between the ages of 13 and 17 to apply for their own library card to foster independence, responsibility, and a love of reading. These individuals are eligible to apply for a library card without a parent present or in possession of an adult borrower card. A completed library card application is required for a card to be issued and must include the name, mailing address, and phone number of a parent who will be contacted by the Library to confirm provided information. The application must be signed, signifying the Independent Youth Borrower's willingness to assume financial responsibility for all materials accessed or borrowed on the card.

Independent Youth Borrowers have full access to digital resources but physical loan limits are restricted to books only, with a maximum of three books checked out at any given time. For primary access, including full allowances of time on Library's public computers and borrowing physical and digital resources to the full limit of maximum checkouts and loan periods, a parent must follow the process for Adult and Youth Borrowers.

Student Digital Borrowers

Students in the Russell County School District whose school librarian, teacher, or administrator participates in the digital borrower program are eligible to apply for a library card with access to digital resources only. Applications must include parent permission and are only effective for the current school year. School officials should contact the Library for more details about this program.

Outreach Borrowers

The Russell County Public Library strives to meet the needs of users residing in Russell County whose physical limitations or geographic barriers prevent them from applying for a library card in-person. These individuals are eligible to apply for a library card through the Outreach Services application. Altered access for Outreach Borrowers is outlined in the Outreach Services Policy.

Guests of the Library

Any user who does not hold a Russell County Public Library card is considered a guest of the Library without restriction on age, education, ethnicity, language, income, physical limitations, or geographic barriers. Guests have access to the Library's public spaces, public wireless network, time-limited guest passes to the public computers, and borrowing uncarded physical resources.

Staff Borrowers

The Library's currently employed staff who possess a library card will be assigned an Adult Borrower type in the Library's circulation system. Staff may waive their own overdue fees and override checkout limits, as they are often utilizing materials for library programs and services. All staff borrowers will be held financially responsible for all damaged or lost materials accessed or borrowed on their library card.

Library Card Renewals and Replacement Library Cards

Library cards must be renewed annually to remain active. Renewals provide an opportunity to verify and update borrower information. All active borrowers in good standing who have lost their library card may request a replacement card at no charge with proof of identification.

Suspension of Access

The Library reserves the right to suspend borrowing access due to violation of the Library Use Guidelines or other policies, unreturned items, unpaid fees, changes in eligibility, duplicate accounts, or upon the request of the user.