

Teen Services Policy

East Lake Community Library
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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the scope of the East Lake Community Library's Teen Services to its tween and teen patrons. In addition to defining the services provided, this policy will outline the standards of behaviors that all middle school and high school students must follow when in the Teen Room, the Library, and when using resources offered by Teen Services. Moreover, this policy will provide guidance to staff on the best practices to follow when serving students following [YALSA's Competencies for Serving Teens](#).

Definitions

For this policy, the library defines tweens and teens as students entering grade 6 through the completion of grade 12 per the local school district. Some of the terms defined may be used interchangeably throughout the policy.

- Young Adults: a broad term for tweens, teens, and new adults between the ages of 11 and 20
- Tweens: students in grades 6 to 8
- Teens: students in grades 9 to 12

Understanding Young Adults

Teenagers undergo massive developmental changes, both in physical and neurological aspects. Studies have shown that all young adult brains experience a massive reorganization between ages 12 to 25 (Dobbs, 2011). By resources and age-appropriate programs designed with the teen brain in mind, the Library can ensure that the library experience is a positive one for all tween and teen patrons.

Goals and Objectives of Teen Services

- To create a welcoming environment for tweens and teens that encourages them to seek out information.
- To develop and maintain collections, services, and opportunities for teens in our community.
- To provide free and equal access to resources and technologies for students at any socioeconomic level.
- To provide active and passive programming that meets the developmental, emotional, social, educational, entertainment, and information needs of teens in our community.
- Ensure that all staff respects and embraces cultural, gender, and economic diversity among all young adults.

Programs and Events

Throughout the year, we offer a variety of programs and events for students in middle school (tweens) and high school (teens). Programs are an extension of services provided by the Library and are defined as planned activities or events that may be developed and presented by Library staff or may be cosponsored by the Library and other community organizations. Programs and events vary to meet the diverse needs and interests of tweens and teens. All young adult programs are open to the public without charge unless the presenter provides supplies for participants that require a cost-recovery fee. Additionally, registration may be required for planning purposes or when space is limited.

General Notes About Programming

- So that all patrons may have a safe, fair, and pleasant experience during programs, guests are asked to abide by the Library's [Patron Code of Conduct](#).
- Parents/guardians of tweens are allowed to stay in the room off to the side.
- Parents/guardians of teens are not allowed to stay in the room as the programs are for high school students only.
 - Parents/guardians may stay during a teen program if a high school student requires their presence.
- Younger siblings and adults without tweens or teens are not permitted to attend to help maintain the safety and enjoyment of teens participating in the program and to maximize the use of limited space.
- All programs and events are created and conducted following the Library's pre-established [Program Policy](#), ensuring they meet the library's standards for quality, inclusivity, and educational value.

Registration for Programs

- Some programs and events may require registration. This is indicated on the promotional fliers throughout the Library. All registration can be completed on the Library Calendar webpage or at the Circulation Desk. Please include participants full name, grade, telephone number, and email when registering.
- If registration is full, up to 5 patrons will be placed on a waiting list. These patrons will be notified on the day of the program if space becomes available to them.
- Teens who cannot attend a registered program should provide at least 24 hours notice to allow others the opportunity to participate.
 - Cancellations can be made by:
 - Calling the Library's Circulation desk
 - Emailing the Teen Librarian
 - Using the online registration system
- Failure to attend a registered program without prior notice may reduce priority for future program registrations. Teens who repeatedly fail to attend registered programs without notice may be temporarily restricted from registering for future events.

- The library will notify registered participants as soon as possible if a program needs to be canceled or rescheduled. Programs may be canceled due to low registration, unforeseen circumstances, or other reasons as determined by the library.

Teen Room

Policy Statement 1

The East Lake Community Library is committed to providing an inviting and safe space for teenage patrons to engage in individual and group activities. This age group's social nature and unique characteristics require a separate space designed for their needs.

Regulations

- The Teen Room is for students in grades 6 to 12.
- The Library recognizes that some teens are homeschooled or virtual learners.
- Traditional, homeschooled, and virtual students in 6th-12th grade are encouraged to take advantage of the Teen Room for studying, accessing computers, utilizing supplies, and the collection.
- While patrons of all ages are welcome to browse and check out materials from the Young Adult collection, the use of computers and other electronic equipment within this area is exclusively for the use of middle school and high school students.
- The Library reserves the right to utilize the Teen Room for scheduled teen programs, events, and gaming activities.
- Adults and/or children may actively browse for materials, briefly tour the space, and seek staff assistance. If adults and/or children are found to be lingering, they will be reminded of the age range for the space and required to relocate to an appropriate area of the library.

Policy Statement 2

Teens are expected to respect the overall Library environment, and may not engage in activities or communications that disrupt other Library users or staff. The Library's policies apply to the Teen Room. The Library reserves the right to limit, suspend, or terminate the use of the Teen Room by teens who, in the judgment of Library staff, are infringing upon the rights of other library users through inappropriate behavior.

Regulations

- Teens shall respect each other, library staff, and other patrons in word and action.
- The Teen Room will be used only for its intended purposes. Pushing, shoving, throwing, hitting, spitting, public displays of affection, swearing, and abusive language are not permitted.

- Any behavior considered aggressive or inappropriate by staff may result in the police being notified and further actions may be taken.
- Vandalism, theft, or damage of library property or library grounds is a legal matter and the police will be notified.
- Food is only permitted in the Teen Room when handed out by Teen staff. Drinks with lids are okay. No open cans in the Teen Room.
- Food and beverages are prohibited near computer equipment.
- The use of the coffee machine and water bottles is for teens only and must remain in the Teen Room.
- All patrons using the Teen Room must follow the Library's [Patron Code of Conduct](#).

Outreach

Teen Services endeavors to reach its tween and teen audience by doing outreach events at the local schools. This allows the greatest opportunity to reach a large group of tweens and teens with the least amount of cost. Some of the ways we utilize the school include:

- Announcing programs and events
- Doing school visits for class instruction or events within the school library
- Working with teachers to support class curriculum

Teen Webpage

The Teen Webpage has been designed and frequently updated to maintain a connection with tweens and teens. The web page is utilized as an extension of Teen Services to provide resources at all times of the day. The web page includes:

- Basic Teen Services information
- Teen programming information
- Promotion of tween and teen books
- Promotion of youth advisory boards and volunteering opportunities
- Reference to other important free teen resources and information

Tween & Teen Readers Advisory

Teen Services strives to connect all tween and teen readers with books and resources. It is an increasing struggle to attract teens to the print medium of the book. Active and Passive Readers Advisory (RA) will be used as a tool to help patrons find their next book or get the information they need. All Reference staff can provide basic RA services to teens. Additionally, staff and patrons can utilize the RA pamphlets provided in the teen area as well as various resources online.

Helping Teens Find and Select Books

- Readers' advisory shall be provided in the following methods: formal or informal readers' advisory interviews with staff; bestseller lists; displays; genre labels; and library resources such as NovelList.
- Patron queries are addressed with no distinction about the purpose of the inquiry or the use of the information. All questions are handled in confidence and with impartiality. Staff does not discriminate based on age, gender, race, sexual preference, disability, or appearance in providing reference or reader advisory services.
- Library staff strives to provide complete, accurate answers to all queries. Simple requests are usually answered fully and quickly. Complex questions may require follow-up at a later time.

Teen Collection

Teen Services focuses on developing and maintaining the YA Fiction, YA Non-Fiction, YA Graphic Novels, and Manga collections. All collections are developed and maintained adhering to the [Library's Collection Development Policy](#). Teen Services adheres to intellectual freedom standards and supports the right of the parent to guide their teen's reading selections. If there are any concerns about materials in the teen area, please follow the [Library's Reconsideration of Library Materials Policy](#).

Advisory Boards

The East Lake Community Library Youth Advisory Boards are two groups of innovative and energetic students in grades 6 to 12, who help shape the future of the Library by developing programs and services, recommending materials for purchase, and promoting the Library to other students.

Teen Advisory Board

The Teen Advisory Board (TAB) is a group of high school students who help to meet one of our library's fundamental goals of bringing more teen patrons into the library. This will involve teen volunteers (14-18 years old) taking responsibility for creating, planning, and running teen programs and events the library supports.

- To join, students must complete the [TAB application](#) which must be turned in to the library. All students will be contacted via email after it's been received.
- The Teen Advisory Board will run from September through April. Meetings will be held at the East Lake Community Library on days/times agreed upon by the TAB and the Teen Services Librarian.
- TAB meetings will have a casual, welcoming, and respectful atmosphere that will allow for discussion and comments by all members. TAB members will show respect for the library staff, patrons, other members, and guests.

- If a TAB member will not be able to make a meeting, they must notify a TAB Officer or TAB Mentor. If two (2) meetings are missed without prior notification, the member's position on the Board will be discussed.
- Because the Teen Advisory Board will count towards service hours, members will be required to attend at least one meeting per month. Volunteers will receive Bright Future Scholarship, National Honors Society (NHS), Creativity Action Service (CAS), etc., service hours for the meetings as well as the events they help plan and run.

Middle School Advisory Board

The Middle School Advisory Board (MSAB) of East Lake Community Library, under the guidance of the Youth Services Department staff members, will offer their time in the creation, planning, and implementation of various activities for middle school-aged patrons. Members will also have the opportunity to gain the necessary skills and insights that will prepare them to be members of our Teen Advisory Board upon entering high school.

- To Join, students must complete the [MSAB application](#) which must be turned in to the library at the Circulation desk. All students will be contacted via email after it's been received.
- The Middle School Advisory Board will run from September through April. Meetings will be held monthly at the East Lake Community Library.
- MSAB meetings will have a casual, welcoming, and respectful atmosphere that will allow for discussion and comments by all members. MSAB members will show respect for the library staff, patrons, other members, and guests.
- If an MSAB member will not be able to make a meeting, they must notify the Teen Services Librarian. If two (2) meetings are missed without prior notification, the member's position on the Board will be discussed.
- Members will be required to attend the monthly meeting and will earn volunteer and/or service hours for the meetings as well as the events they help plan and run.

Services

Teen Services focuses on providing a variety of cost-free services to its tween and teen patrons.

Comfort Locker

Located in the Teen Room, the Comfort Locker holds a variety of basic health necessities such as body wash wipes, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, tampons, pads, antiperspirant wipes, and more. All items are free for students in grades 6th to 12th to take.

Computer and Internet Access

Teens in grades 6-12 (middle and high school students) may check out a laptop for in-library use only by signing the Teen Laptop Sign-In Sheet at the front desk.

Guidelines:

- Laptops can be used in the Teen Room only.
- All users must follow the library's Internet Use Policy.
- Laptops must be returned to the front desk staff after use.
- Patrons are responsible for any damages that occur while the laptop is checked out to them.
- Laptops may be used until 30 minutes before closing.
- Failure to comply with these policies may result in loss of laptop privileges.
- All computers provide free public Internet Access
- By choosing to use the Library's Internet access points, users agree to abide by the Library's [Computer Usage and Internet Policy](#)

Free Printing

Students can print any school paper at the library for free. In addition to printing from a library computer, patrons can print directly from their smartphone, tablet, laptop, or home computer by using [Princh](#).

- Black and white (letter or legal size)
- Color (letter or legal size)

Behaviors

Teen Services welcomes all tweens and teens into its facilities and provides a safe space that facilitates learning. Therefore, all middle school and high school students are expected to follow the Library's [Patron Code of Conduct](#).

- As with all other patrons, staff members will kindly speak to the young adult and explain a policy violation, and its consequences, and ask for a correction of behavior.
- If the young adult continues to violate the policy, then the teen will be asked to leave the library for the day.
- If the young adult does not leave the library, staff should contact law enforcement.

Miscellaneous Information About Teen Services

- Parents are responsible for helping their teens select appropriate books. The Library does not endorse specific titles, nor does it act in loco parentis.
- If you notice that a lot of teens are requesting a book title or asking for specific types of information to complete an assignment, please pass this information along to the Teen Services librarian. This information is useful to us in collection development, the future

development of programs, and the development of research aids such as pathfinders and booklists.

- If a teacher, school, or organization calls enquiring about services we do not currently offer, these requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case scenario depending on time and resources. Please refer these calls to the Teen Services librarian.

References

Dobbs, D. (2011). Beautiful brains. *National Geographic*, 220(4), 36-59.