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Service Policy

Library Card Registration

The Boyertown Community Library (BCL) provides services to all residents of the County of Berks without discrimination in fulfillment of its mission to develop services, resources and collections to meet the cultural, informational, educational and recreational needs of its diverse community.

All library transaction records are confidential under Article IV. Section 428 of the Public Library Code (24 PA C.S.).

BCL issues library cards to establish a patron account, facilitate loan of materials and use of online resources, and to enable the library to keep a record of which materials are on loan to patrons. Individuals who live, own property, work, or attend school in Berks County are eligible for a free library card. This card is also referred to as a Full-Service Library Card.

Library cards are valid for use at all Berks County Public Library (BCPL) member libraries, Reading Area Community College, and the Council on Chemical Abuse.

To borrow materials from BCL, a person must register for a library card. Applicants must present proper proof of residency and identity, and complete and sign a library card application. By virtue of the signature, the applicant agrees to accept responsibility for all fines, fees, or charges incurred through library transactions. Applicants are able to obtain a registration form online; but must present proof of residency and identity before receiving a library card.

Anyone under the age of 18 may receive a library card after completing an application signed by a parent or legal guardian presenting proper proof of residency and identity. The parent or guardian agrees to be financially responsible for the use of the card and all charges incurred pursuant to the Borrowing Policies. The juvenile card will be linked to the parent or guardian's library card account. BCL requires the parent or guardian to also apply for a library card if they do not already have one.

Upon turning 18, a minor who has a library card must apply for a new card and thereby assume financial responsibility for the account.

BCL is a participant in the ACCESS PA Statewide Library card program and adheres to its rules and regulations for free reciprocal library cards. Pennsylvania residents who hold a valid library card from an out-of-county library or a State library card are eligible for a BCPL card without fee. Such non-residents of Berks County are required to register and provide proof of identity and the home library card.

BCL will provide non-ACCESS PA County-wide library cards to any Pennsylvania resident who can provide proof of residency. These non-ACCESS PA cards will allow the cardholder physical material access at any BCPL location. This card does not include access to digital media types including but not limited to: Overdrive/Libby, Databases, etc. This card does not give access to the ACCESS PA Statewide Library Card program. This card is also referred to as a Limited-Service Library Card.

Non-residents of Pennsylvania may be issued a borrower card upon payment of a \$40 annual fee and upon providing proof of identity in the same manner as county residents. This card can be used only at BCPL libraries. These cardholders receive a Full-Service Library Card.

Library Card Information

Identity and Residency Requirements

The applicant must provide full legal name, address and date of birth. Applicants must also provide valid ~~photo~~ identification that verifies name and current address.

Institutional and Homeschooling Requirements

Institutions may receive an institutional borrower card, providing the Director or other authorized person of the agency signs the application and commits to the financial responsibility of all fees and charges incurred pursuant to the Borrowing Policies.

Homeschooling educators may apply for a Homeschool borrower card upon presentation of an affidavit as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and issued by the local school district. The affidavit covers the school year, and the borrower card registration must be renewed annually. A homeschooling card enables the cardholder to borrow up to 150 items at one time and place 50 hold requests.

Because Pennsylvania law does not require homeschooling educators working with children younger than 8 to have an affidavit, those educators working exclusively with students under 8 may receive a homeschooling card at the discretion of the Library Director.

Provisional Library Cards

BCL may issue provisional library cards, at the discretion of the Library Director, with specific restrictions or limitations.

Cardholder Responsibilities

Cardholders should present a valid library card in order to check out materials and to use library computer resources. If a library card is not available, the cardholder must provide a photo ID and proof of address that exactly matches the address on the account.

Adult cardholders can designate other adult cardholders to pick up reserved materials for them by completing a “Holds PickUp” form. This authorization is specifically noted in the cardholder’s account.

A cardholder is responsible for all materials checked out on his or her library card and on the cards of minor children for whom s/he has assumed responsibility on a library card application.

As of January 1, 2023, Boyertown Community Library no longer charges fines on the majority of the materials patrons can borrow, including adult and juvenile books, movies, and audio materials. Late fines will be charged on special items such as museum passes, Library of Things items, and Interlibrary Loan (ILL) items. Fees will be charged for lost and/or damaged materials.

Cardholders are responsible for all charges on their account including payments for any lost or damaged items borrowed on their card.

Cardholders are responsible to report address, telephone and/or email changes.

Lost or stolen library cards must be reported immediately so that the card can be invalidated. The owner of the card is responsible for all items checked out on the card until the card is reported lost or stolen.

Cardholder Privileges

Cardholders may use their library barcode number to access library databases from home, check their library borrowing record, place holds on library materials and borrow electronic resources.

Suspension of Cardholder Privileges

A cardholder's account is considered delinquent when items are overdue or money is owed. This status may affect the cardholder's ability to borrow materials, place holds or use electronic/digital resources. Privileges will be suspended when there are:

- Accumulated charges of more than \$10.00. Cardholder privileges for any adult responsible for any juvenile account(s) will be suspended when the sum of all charges associated with the adult account is more than \$10.00
- Fines and fees from a previous calendar year (All accounts must be paid in full by the end of each calendar year before items may be borrowed in a new calendar year)
- 4 or more items with a status of 'claimed returned'

Expiration of Library Cards

All library cards must be renewed every three years. If, at the end of three years, there has been no activity on the account, and there are no outstanding charges or unreturned materials, the account is considered inactive.

Material Loan Periods

Loan periods

- 21 days - audio materials, books, some DVD sets, e-Book Readers, and magazines.
- 7 days - DVDs, Launchpads, and Museum passes, Library of Things, games

Non-standard item loan periods are set by owning libraries and ILL

Renewals

Most materials, unless on reserve for another patron are automatically renewed for 2 loan periods unless on hold. Renewals for longer loan periods are granted on an exception basis.

Items may be renewed at the library, online through the library website, or by phone. The cardholder's barcode number is required for telephone renewals.

Maximum Number of Items

The maximum number of items that can be borrowed is 50 per card (except in the case of homeschooling cards, as noted above). The following items are subject to the following limits:

- Maximum of 5 DVDs per card
- Maximum of 5 magazines per card
- Maximum of 1 Launch Pad per card
- Maximum of 1 Museum Pass per card

Placing a Hold (or Request/Reserve)

If an item is not available at the time and place that it is sought, cardholders can place a hold (request/reserve) on the item at any Berks County library, by phone, or online. Cardholders will be notified when the item is available.

Items placed on hold (requested/reserved) may be picked up at BCL or another Berks County library which must be specified at the time the hold was placed. Member libraries may restrict or limit pick-up options for certain items. Held items must be picked up within 7 days of notification, with the exception of Museum Passes and Library of Things which must be picked up within 3 days.

Fines

As of January 1, 2023, Boyertown Community Library no longer charges fines on the majority of the materials patrons can borrow, including adult and juvenile books, movies, and audio materials. Late fines will be charged on special items such as museum passes, Library of Things items, and Interlibrary Loan items. Fees will be charged for lost and/or damaged materials.

- Fines for Library of Things items: \$1.00 per day
- Fines for Museum Pass: \$1.00 per day, maximum \$25
- ILL items are \$1.00 per day

Overdue Notices

Cardholders are notified when items checked out become delinquent. A billing invoice is sent if, after 2 overdue notices, the items have not been returned. Section 6708 of Title 18, Pennsylvania Code makes it a summary offense to retain library property after being notified to return it.

Fees

- For lost/damaged museum pass: \$15.00
- For all other lost/damaged items: Replacement value

Refunds for Lost Items

Once an item has been paid for, no refund will be given.

Returns and Book Drop Policy

Most items belonging to any Berks County public library may be returned at any Berks County public library. Exceptions include museum passes, Library of Things, video games, and items borrowed from outside the BCPL system. There is a book drop and a media drop located on the front patio of the library for patrons to use at their convenience. All items in the book drop and media drop prior to 10 am each morning will be checked in as though it was the previous day.

This policy shall be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees and the Director. Revisions may be made to fit the needs of the community and patrons.

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