

## **Value Statement of the Indian Valley Public Library**

### **The Indian Valley Public Library: In Service to the Community**

The Indian Valley Public Library (IVPL) serves five of the communities within the Souderton Area School District – Franconia, Lower Salford, Salford, Souderton, and Telford – as a “third place.”

A “third place” is defined as an accessible and accommodating space within a community where people from all walks of life can gather. It is not a new concept. Its origins can be traced to Benjamin Franklin’s Junto Club gatherings. These gatherings were community discussion forums which led to the creation of The Library Company of Philadelphia in 1731, predating the birth of the United States. The IVPL reflects our Indian Valley community as such a space, serving as an extension of each municipality, providing resources and opportunities otherwise unavailable to many of our region’s citizens and doing so free of charge.

We value the positive impact our public library has on our children. We value literacy and promoting a love of reading. We value respect for each individual person and recognize the need to serve all members of our public. We value community and the potential for our library to strengthen our democracy by inviting civic engagement and civil discussions.

There are currently over 30,000 individuals in our community with IVPL library cards.

In addition to access to reading materials, the IVPL’s services include these amenities in support of the community:

- Internet Access & Wireless Printing; Internet Hotspots
- Exhibits, Displays & Bulletin Boards
- Interlibrary Loan
- Meeting Rooms
- Book Sales / Donations
- Museum Passes
- Curbside Pickup
- Proctoring Exams

The IVPL is a forum for many groups and programs, which can be viewed on our [online calendar](#). These events range from book clubs and storytime to chess and other game groups, talks on mental health to homeschool science fairs and evening yoga.

The IVPL is more than just books.

- The IVPL is a lifeline to the most vulnerable members of our community. We provide a place where seniors can learn how to use technology, students can study, job seekers can look for work. This is especially true for those who cannot afford or have the ability to have home internet service.
- The IVPL serves public health, staving off the [epidemic of loneliness](#) for people of all ages.

- The IVPL provides a necessary service to many members of the community, especially students who are home schooled and attending charter schools.
- Communities with services like a robust public library enjoy an overall higher return on investment, including higher property values.
- The IVPL employs 36 full and part time people and provides internships and volunteer opportunities to high school students and various members of the community.

## The IVPL Collection

The Indian Valley Public Library provides a balanced and broad collection of materials in appropriate and varied formats to meet the educational, informational and recreational needs of the community in alignment with our [collection development policy](#).

Our collection development criteria aligns with processes that are consistent with the practice of libraries throughout the nation and the American Library Association.

The criteria used to select materials include: Literary merit; enduring value; accuracy; authoritativeness; social significance; importance of subject matter to the collection; timeliness; popular demand; cost; scarcity of material on the subject and availability elsewhere; quality and suitability of the format; other considerations may be applicable in specific subject areas.

Subject area librarians (Adult, Children's and Young Adult) use professional review journals to select materials for IVPL. The most common journals used are [Publishers Weekly](#), [Library Journal](#), [School Library Journal](#), [Booklist](#), and [The Horn Book](#).

The Library denies that any "pornographic" materials are included in its circulation and the books deemed by others as being inappropriate are designated by the above industry sources as being appropriate for circulation and they are included in the circulation of other local libraries. Despite inferences otherwise, these materials are shelved away from the children's section. Excerpts from those publications lack critical context both in terms of the books themselves, their accessibility to children and the background of their inclusion in library circulation.

Librarians choose materials that build a well-rounded collection reflecting various viewpoints and opinions. While the library does endeavor to support school curricula, textbooks are not collected.

All public libraries have materials that some people will find objectionable. IVPL's collection development policy explains how the materials have been selected and how they cannot be removed without following a thorough process of evaluation. The policies and forms for this process are readily available including [on the library website](#). IVPL also has a [process](#) where members of the communities we serve may address the IVPL board.

The materials that are frequently referenced as inappropriate for the IVPL's collection remain in circulation, unchallenged via the official means of requesting evaluation. Their inclusion is within

the norms of libraries in the United States, as these same materials are available in many other libraries across the country.

## **Unattended Minor Policy**

It is absolutely critical to note that unattended minors in the library are exceptionally rare and community members are very good at monitoring and supervising their children. Under this policy, the library staff does and will address If a minor enters the library by themselves or if a child is discovered moving through the adult section unaccompanied by an adult. This Unattended Minor Policy is currently under review by the Library Board of Trustees and additional training to library staff members on its implementation is being considered.

## **Access to Materials**

### **Material Check-out**

Should there be a concern regarding your children's library use, we recommend another approach to assist in curating your children's library experience: designate the adults as the library card holders of the family. This way the adults are the only members of the family who can check out library materials.

Parents and legal guardians are ultimately responsible for guiding and monitoring a child's library use. We feel strongly that it is the parents'/legal guardians' responsibility to monitor the reading/viewing/listening of library materials. Literacy is one of the IVPL's core values and a child having their own library card is a means of achieving literacy and a love of lifelong learning. However, once a minor has their own library card, they are subject to privacy protections via law. The library does not monitor, control, or restrict what an individual child selects for check out when a parent is not present.

The IVPL currently has a process in place that acts as a failsafe to assist parents in monitoring their children's use of library resources. Upon request, a parent can add a note to their child's library card restricting their child from checking out specific materials the parent deems as inappropriate. The IVPL board is considering ways to increase awareness of this avenue.

Also, children are not required to have their own individual library card to access the library or its materials. Parents are required to sign an authorization for children under the age of 15 to have a library card. As a part of the registration process, parents are advised that issuance of a library card to a child provides them significant freedom in accessing materials and checking them out, subject to the Unattended Minor Policy. As a part of the registration process parents are advised of the option to not have their child issued an individual card and to have the family share the parent or guardian's card. The library board is considering integrating this process into the Unattended Minor Policy to increase awareness of this option.

In addition, those who would like to more closely monitor their child's library card account have the following options:

- Monitor library notices sent to the home address via US mail or email.
- Use the child's library card and PIN to monitor their library records through their online account.
- When making a phone or in-person request for information, be prepared to have the child on the phone line or there in person to verify that they give permission to the library to share confidential information with you

## Physical Access to Mature Materials

The physical layout of the library has been intentionally established to deter children's access to materials considered too mature for their consumption.

- The Children's section of the IVPL has a single entrance and exit, allowing parents/guardians ease of monitoring their movements.
- Many of the materials deemed to be "mature" in recent discussions, including the adult graphic novels, are intentionally located out of children's view, in a place that is easily monitored but not in a way so prominent as to attract attention. They are near the Adult Fiction and Adult Large Print sections, by the emergency exit. This is the furthest point from the Children's section. They are also shelved in a manner that is easily monitored by parents.
- The Library is currently considering additional signage in the children's section and at the library entrance emphasizing the responsibility of a parent to monitor their children.

## The Indian Valley Public Library is for Everyone

The IVPL staff and Board of Trustees has spent much time in the first half of 2023 discussing the [nationally-led campaign](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jan/24/us-conservatives-campaign-books-ban-schools) (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jan/24/us-conservatives-campaign-books-ban-schools>) to restrict access to materials in libraries.

We have wrestled with the practice of placing certain books in our collection in a separate area, impeding the access to those items. Censorship is not a practice that we uphold. If we begin to separate books that may offend one reader, where does that path lead?

*"Libraries manifest the promises of the First Amendment by making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions, and ideas, so that every person has the opportunity to freely read and consider information and ideas regardless of their content or the viewpoint of the author. This requires the professional expertise of librarians who work in partnership with their communities to curate collections that serve the information needs of all their users."*  
[American Library Association - Statement Regarding Censorship](#)

We operate in alignment with this statement regarding censorship.

We are an organization that serves our community - all members of our community. We believe that parents, guardians, individuals, and library staff can all work together to provide a place of learning and gathering.

The IVPL is an independent member of the Montgomery County District of libraries. As an Access PA participant, the IVPL serves all Pennsylvania residents under the Access-PA program.

Our team of dedicated professionals are here to serve you. Contact us by visiting [ivpl.org/contact-us](https://ivpl.org/contact-us) or call 215-723-9109.