

NOAH WEBSTER EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION MODEL POLICY

TO: TBD
FROM: Noah Webster Educational Foundation
RE: Library Link Program Standards Model Policy
DATE: TBD

This model policy seeks to help school boards protect students from accessing obscene and inappropriate materials at the public library through the Library Link program or similar programs. Working with parents and the community library, school boards can safely expand access to resources.

Library Link Program Standards Model Policy

AUTHORS:

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BACKGROUND: Several states and districts participate in the Library Link Program. This program uses community support to expand students' access to resources by allowing them to use their student ID card as a public library card. In some districts, books can even be ordered from the public library to the public school library for borrowing. While this program opens access to learning materials, it also puts students at a higher risk of accidentally obtaining obscene materials. This policy seeks to establish additional guidelines for implementing the Library Link Program to safeguard students from accessing obscene materials.

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Subject: Library Link Program Standards Model Policy

I. Description of Policy

This **School Board/School Division** actively engages in the Library Link Program, connecting students to public library resources in the community through their student identification card. This policy outlines protocols and procedures to safeguard students from accessing inappropriate materials. Inappropriate materials are any materials that meet the qualifications of “obscene” as set by the district.¹ This policy will:

- A. Outline requirements for schools engaged in the Library Link Program; and
- B. Outline requirements for parental notification of involvement in the program; and
- C. Provide a framework for parental permission forms to access certain materials.

II. Requirements for Public Library Linking

The **[school board district]** is responsible for students in the district, ensuring their safety and providing them with substantial resources to support their learning. The library link program expands students' access to scholarly resources but also exposes them to the possibility of explicit materials. To prevent students from accessing obscene materials through the public library, the district and its schools will take the following precautions:

- A. Students' identification card restrictions will only allow access to materials deemed appropriate by the district's definition of obscenity and approved by parental consent.
- B. Providing public libraries involved in the library link program with the standards for appropriate and prohibited library materials for students, as set by the district.
- C. Equipping teachers and the school librarians to discuss appropriate library materials and the use of student identification cards for those materials at the beginning of each grading period.

III. Parental Notification

Schools within **[schoolboard district]** should ensure that parents/guardians are notified annually of their school's involvement in the library link program. This notification should be sent digitally and require a parent/guardian signature. The notice should describe the library link program, including the following information:

- A. Libraries that allow access to materials through student identification cards.
- B. How students can use their school student identification card to access public library resources digitally and in person.
- C. Online tutoring, streaming, and reading platforms are accessible to students through the program.

¹ If your district does not have a definition for obscenity, consider using the provided definition by your state, the federal government, or the following: “ The term ‘obscenity’ as defined throughout this policy refers to that which, considered as a whole, has as its dominant theme or purpose an appeal to the prurient interest in sex, that is, a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, excretory functions or products thereof or sadomasochistic abuse, and which goes substantially beyond customary limits of candor in description or representation of such matters and which, taken as a whole, does not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

- D. If a child's parents/guardians do not return a signed notice to the school, the school administration is responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure the parents/guardians are aware of the notice by obtaining a signature of verification. Reasonable steps might include emailing a second notice and reminder to parents/guardians, calling to discuss the matter, or arranging a meeting between the school administrator and parents/guardians to resolve the issue.

IV. Parental Opt Out for Library Link

The schools within [this district] will include information allowing parents to opt their child out of the Library Link program in the annual parental notification about the program. If a parent requests to opt their child out of the Library Link program, they should provide a written request to be maintained in the school record system. All parental opt-outs should be respected and enforced immediately upon receiving the request.

V. Parental Permission Requirement

The schools in [this district] will require parental permission for students to borrow books more than two reading levels above their grade level. A permission slip will be sent to parents/guardians for review and signature to allow their student to sign out books at a higher reading level.