

## **Child Safety Policy**

We want the public library to be a welcoming, safe place for your children. Our staff has many duties to perform in order to serve all patrons in the best way possible. For this reason, the staff cannot monitor the whereabouts or behavior of our smallest patrons – your children. Staff cannot assume responsibility of your children’s care when they are in the library. No public place, including the library, can guarantee the safety of children. A child could be approached by a stranger, become ill, wander outside, or become lost or injured. We are primarily concerned with your children’s safety, and we believe that our policy helps ensure their well-being.

- We expect parents/caregivers to be responsible for their children’s behavior at the library. A caregiver must be at least 12 years of age.
- We expect parents to understand and explain the library rules to their children. The rules and policies have been developed to safeguard the collection and ensure fairness for all library users.
- We expect parents to see that overdue fines are promptly paid. Parents are financially responsible for any damages to library materials, equipment or property incurred by their children.
- We expect parents to keep sick children at home and not bring them to the library, especially during children’s programming when illness may easily be spread to other children.

We care about the safety of your child. If a child under the age of 8 is found unattended while the library is open, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, law enforcement officials will be called, and the child will be placed in their care.

**Updated and Approved May 16, 2024**

## **Child Safety Policy and Procedures for Library Staff**

Staff members have many duties and can neither supervise children nor act as a substitute for daycare. Children through age 8 must have a parent or caregiver in the immediate vicinity unless they are participating in a library program. Parents or caregivers who do not attend the program with the child should remain in the building. Parents are still responsible for the actions of their children. Children 8-12 may use the library unattended for an amount of time appropriate to their age and maturity. It is important for staff to take note of disruptions caused by children who apparently are unaccompanied. Children using inappropriate behavior will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child and parent/caregiver shall be asked to leave the library. If a child in this age group is unaccompanied by an adult or appropriate-aged caregiver, the staff will follow the directions below for children found on Library premises without a parent or caregiver. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency. The library staff in no way assumes responsibility for the care of any age child. If a child is found without a parent or caregiver, the staff will:

1. Attempt to comfort the child, if necessary.
2. Locate the parent or caregiver in the library and explain the Child Safety Policy.
3. Make every effort to contact the parent or caregiver who is not in the library to come and pick up the child. Staff will express the library's concern for the child's safety and explain the Child Safety Policy.
4. Call law enforcement officials to pick up the child if the parent or caregiver cannot be located within 30 minutes. Staff will notify the director that law enforcement officials have been called.
5. Encourage an unattended child to contact the parent or guardian if it is within 15 minutes of closing time. If a parent or caregiver cannot be reached or does not arrive within 15 minutes of closing, Library staff will call law enforcement to pick up child. Staff will notify the director that police have been called.
6. Remain with the child until the parent or caregiver or police arrive. This is compensated time for the staff member(s) who remain with the child.
7. Leave a note on the library door stating "Unattended child is in the custody of the police" once the child is in the care of the police. Names will not be stated on the sign.
8. Not transport any child from the library to another location.

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