

SAFE CHILD AND DEPENDENT ADULT POLICY

Purpose:

The Norwalk Easter Public Library welcomes all ages and strives to provide an environment/place for all to enjoy. The safety and welfare of children and dependent adults at the library is of upmost importance, however, the library is a public building open to all. Dependent adults and young children should be supervised by age appropriate, responsible parties. Parents and caregivers are responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behavior of persons in their care while they are in the library. The Library Board and staff respect the rights and privacy of all library patrons. Library staff will intervene only when juveniles or dependent adults are left unattended or issues relating to safety, disruptive behavior, or well-being occur. Library staff will follow established library procedure for the protection of the involved party and to maintain an environment free from disruption in accordance with the Library Conduct Policy.

Unattended Children/Dependent Adults in the Library

- An unattended child is defined as a minor under the age of 10 who are required to be accompanied by a parent or caregiver. For the purpose of this policy, a responsible caregiver shall be defined as a person(s) 14 years of age or older. A dependent adult is a person over the age of 18 who is unable to care for themselves.
- The library does not have staff, staff training or State Certification to act as a child care facility or in lieu of trained staff or family for dependent adults.
- The library staff is not responsible for the care of unattended children and/or dependent adults and does not assume responsibility from the parents or caregivers for providing for the welfare of persons in their care.
- Library staff is not responsible for children or dependent adults interacting with or leaving the library with persons who are not appropriate caregivers.
- Library staff is not responsible for any consequences of parents or caregivers forfeiting their responsibilities.
- Library staff may refer to the police those children or Dependent adults who are left unattended in the library when a parent/guardian cannot be reached or if the behavior of the minor child or Dependent adult falls outside that of acceptable behavior in the library.

Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities

- Parents/caregivers should remain with persons in their care and be responsible for the care of those persons inside the library

- Children under the age ten (10) must be under supervision by a parent or responsible caregiver at all times while in the library. For the purpose of this policy, a responsible caregiver shall be defined as a person(s) 14 years of age or older.
- Parents or caregivers are responsible for the safety and appropriate behavior of each child or dependent adult in their care.
- Parents/caregivers should encourage positive behavior by persons under their care while in the library.
- Children or groups of children visiting the library from any preschool, childcare or babysitting facility must be under supervision at all times by caregivers to ensure safety and to monitor behavior.
- It is not the responsibility of the library to monitor anyone's use of the Internet or to decide which resources are appropriate. It is the library's policy that parents or caregivers must assume responsibility for deciding what library resources are appropriate for their dependents. Concerned parents or caregivers should let their dependents know if there are any materials they do not wish them to use.

Staff Guidelines

- Staff will attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or caregiver to address concerns of lost, unattended, or scared children or Dependent adults, or those with conduct issues.
 - If the parent or responsible caregiver is not in the library, the staff member will attempt to contact the parent or caregiver using information provided by the child or Dependent adult, the library's customer database, or the telephone directory. When contacted, the parent or caregiver must make arrangements for the child or dependent adult to be picked up immediately.
 - If the parent or caregiver cannot be located, or if a contacted parent or caregiver has not picked up their child or dependent adult within 30 minutes of being called, the staff member will contact the police.
- Library staff may not take children or Dependent adults out of the building, unless caregivers are located within sight of the facility, nor is staff permitted to transport children or Dependent adults away from Library facilities.
- For the safety of a child or Dependent adult left unattended in the library at closing, appropriate law enforcement authorities will be contacted to take custody after a time period of 15 minutes following closing if attempts to contact the parent, legal guardian, or custodian are unsuccessful and will stay until law enforcement authorities arrive.
- The library assumes no responsibility for any child or dependent adult left unattended in the library.

- All library customers, no matter what age, are subject to the library's rules of conduct.

Adopted by the Norwalk Easter Public Library February 10, 2003

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