

EAST LONGMEADOW PUBLIC LIBRARY

SAFE CHILD POLICY

Introduction

The East Longmeadow Public Library staff hopes that children using the library will find it an inviting place to develop a love of books and reading, as well as a place to find materials which serve their informational, educational, and recreational needs. Children are encouraged to visit the library and to take advantage of its resources.

Recognizing that the East Longmeadow Public Library cannot guarantee absolute safety to everyone using it, the library affirms its obligation to exercise reasonable care to promote the safety and welfare of children while they are in the library and to create a safe environment to protect against reasonably foreseeable harm.

Many children are capable of using the library on their own, and should not be discouraged from doing so; however, some children left alone may become frightened or anxious, while others may exhibit behavior inappropriate to a library setting.

The following policy statement and accompanying procedures are designed to address the library's concern for the welfare of children and are not intended to restrict, discourage, or frustrate appropriate use of the library.

Policy Statement

In order to create an environment of safety and maintain an atmosphere where reading and study can be encouraged, the following policy has been adopted:

Children of all ages are welcome in the library. It is the responsibility of parents, legal guardians, and other caregivers to ensure appropriate behavior, supervision, and safety of children in their care. The library staff is not responsible for the supervision of children left unattended by their parents, legal guardians, or caregivers.

For the purposes of this policy, an unattended child refers to a child in the library alone, or a child whose parent, legal guardian, or caregiver is in the library but is not directly supervising that child. The latter situation may occur when the adult and child are in separate areas of the building, or when the adult is using library materials or equipment and is not supervising the child.

Children seven years old and under must be accompanied and directly supervised by a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver. Children eight to eleven years old may use the library unattended, as long as a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver is in the library.

All children, while in the library, are subject to the rules and regulations in effect regarding proper library behavior and conduct. Children determined by the staff to be disrupting normal library activities will be given one warning and, if the behavior persists, will be asked to leave the library.

Parents, legal guardians, or caregivers are solely responsible for ensuring that children have transportation home when the library closes. Under no circumstances will library staff drive or transport a minor home from the library. If an unattended minor is left in the library when the library closes, staff will attempt to contact the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver. If the parent, legal guardian or caregiver cannot be located, the library staff will refer the unattended minor to the appropriate authorities.

The "Safe Child Policy" is subject to review and amendment by the Board of Library Trustees.

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees, December, 2005.

Amended by the Board of Library Trustees, November, 2013.