

Mattapoisett Free Public Library

Safe Child Policy

The staff of the Mattapoisett Free Public Library hopes that the children who use the library will find the facility to be a warm and inviting place that will encourage and develop their love of reading, curiosity, and appreciation of all library resources.

This policy is intended to address the welfare of children and is not intended to restrict the appropriate use of the library. For the purpose of this policy, an “unattended child” refers to a child who is left alone in the library, or a child whose parent or guardian is in the library but who is not adequately supervising that child, whether because they are in separate parts of the building, or when the adult is using materials or equipment and thus is not supervising the child.

The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/guardian/caregiver and not with library personnel.

Children are expected to adhere to the same rules of behavior and appropriate library use as stated for all patrons with the following additions:

- Parents and legal guardians are responsible for the behavior of their children in the library and may not leave a child under the age of 8 unattended. They should remain in the immediate vicinity of the child and in visual contact with the child.
- Children ages 8 and older may be left unattended, at the discretion of their parents or legal guardians, and will be subject to the Patron Behavior Policy. Children left unattended should know how to reach a parent or guardian should the need arise.
- When leaving a child unattended, a parent or guardian must be aware of the closing times of the library. If a parent or guardian does not arrive in time for library closing, an attempt will be made to contact them. If no one

can be reached, the police department will be called. Library staff will not transport children away from the library.

- When children are attending library programs, parents must be aware of the times of the programs as well as age requirements. In some cases, parent or adult participation is required along with the child's participation. This will be noted as part of the program registration information.
- If a problem arises with children of any age and the staff is unable to locate the parent(s), or if the library is closing and the parents/guardian cannot be located, a police officer may be called at the discretion of the staff.
- In case of a medical emergency involving a child, when the parent or guardian is not present, the library staff will call 911 first and then contact the child's parent or guardian.

Approved by the Board of Trustees April 20, 2023