



## CHILD SAFETY POLICY

The Northborough Free Library welcomes children of all ages to use and enjoy the facilities, collections and programs offered by the library. The library attempts to provide a safe environment for children to select books and other materials, and participate in library programs.

Young children are safe when supervised by a parent, caregiver or mature adolescent (herein called “responsible adult”) while in the library. Responsible adults should remember that the library is a public building **available for the use of all**, and staff are not able to monitor the use of the children’s room at all times. For the protection and well-being of children who enjoy libraries, the following policy has been established:

1. All children age nine (9) years old and younger must be accompanied and continually supervised by a responsible adult while in the library.
2. The responsible adult must stay in the library building while their child age nine (9) or younger is attending a library-sponsored program. The responsible adult must escort the child to the program and meet the child at the conclusion of each library program. Children attending library programs are supervised by the library staff only during the scheduled time of the program.
3. At the discretion of a responsible adult (age 14 or older), a child age ten (10) or older may be left unattended for the period of time needed to select materials, complete a homework assignment, or attend a program. The child must know how to reach the responsible adult in case the need should arise. Children should not be left for excessively long periods of time.
4. All visitors to the library must conduct themselves in accordance with the Library’s Patron Behavior Policy. Disruptive behavior including shouting, running, pushing, or other rambunctious activities, is not permitted. Staff will ask disruptive children to leave the building in an orderly manner. The responsible adult will be notified if older children using the library independently are not adhering to the guidelines of this policy.
5. Responsible adults must be familiar with the library’s hours of operation and should not leave children before opening or after closing. Also, close attention must be paid to unexpected closings (storms, power outages, etc.). Prior arrangements and contingency plans for immediate pick-up should be discussed with the child. Library staff are not responsible for supervising children left alone when the library is closed.
6. If a child has been left at the library without a ride or assistance home at closing time, every attempt will be made to contact a responsible adult by telephone. If a responsible adult cannot be reached within 15 minutes, the Northborough police will be called to escort the child home or to keep the child until parents can be reached. Two staff members will remain with the child until the police have arrived. Should these actions take place, the Library Director will be informed and will contact the child’s parent(s) to explain the library policy and why the action was required. Please note that staff are not

permitted to remain after hours with an unattended child nor give him/her a ride home or to any other location.

7. Children age nine (9) and younger must be accompanied by an adult on the elevator.
8. Online catalog computers in the library building are not intended for use by children age five (5) or younger. The library does not filter content on any computer. As such, it is the responsibility of a parent or caregiver to ensure appropriate use of the online terminals and other electronic library resources by young children. Pounding on keyboards and other potentially damaging activities are not permitted. Parents/guardians shall assume liability for any damaged library and/or town property.

Children are our most precious commodity. Please help us protect them!

Revised by Board of Trustees, November 10, 2015