

Rules of Library Behavior and Unattended Children Policy

Policy Statement:

To achieve the goals of good Library service, the Board of Trustees accepts the responsibility of ensuring that the Library building facilities will adequately meet the physical requirements of modern library services and offer to the community a compelling invitation to enter, read, look, listen, learn, and enjoy.

The Trustees and staff seek to provide a comfortable environment for all library users and to be good stewards of the town's property. Those using the Library have a right to expect a safe, comfortable environment that supports library services.

We expect all library users to observe common courtesy toward other users and library staff. Disruptive and discourteous behavior includes, but is not limited to, misuse of library property and actions that deliberately disturb others or prevent the legitimate use of the library and its resources.

Rules of Library Behavior:

1. Library users should respect the rights of others and not engage in loud conversations or activities, profane or abusive language, use of audio devices without headphones, or other potentially disturbing actions.
2. Harassment of others, either verbally or by physical action(s) is prohibited. This includes any actions that library users or staff members perceive to be harassment.
3. Threatening the safety of another person is prohibited.
4. Use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs is prohibited in the library.
5. Only certified assist animals, trained to assist persons with disabilities, are allowed in the library. Assist animals in training may be allowed in the library. Animals present for planned programming activities are allowed in the Library.
6. Children age 10 and under may not be left unattended in the library and must be supervised by a designated caregiver 16 years or older. Disruptive behavior or damage to library materials may result in a request to take children out of the Library. Please refer to the "Unattended Children" policy for more information.
7. Theft or damage to library property is prohibited and may result in the appropriate prosecution and/or necessary restitution.

Violations of this policy will result in increasing levels of action, starting with a verbal warning. If, per staff judgement, behavior rises to the level of violation of federal, state, county, or municipal laws, or poses an immediate threat to the safety or well-being of other library users or staff, patron may be asked to leave immediately.

Police will be notified by staff if the threat to the public or staff appears imminent.

The level of action will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of the Library Director or the Trustees, or the supervising staff member on duty, including but not limited to restriction of use of library and library materials. A library user may appeal any such decision to the Board of Trustees who will review any appeals at their next scheduled meeting.

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Extraordinary Circumstance:

Extraordinary circumstances may arise which, from time to time, require response from library staff and patrons. This response may require certain actions, modifications, or restrictions on behavior in the Library. Responses may be dictated by federal, state, county, or municipal guidance. This may include (but is not limited to):

1. Limiting occupancy of the building;
2. Requiring “curbside pickup” of materials;
3. Requiring certain health and safety measures while occupying the building.

The library views these as enforceable precautions or actions, violations of which may result in expulsion of non-complaint patrons. Guidance will be posted in a clear and visible location for visitors and is not negotiable.

Unattended Children

The Sandown Public Library welcomes and encourages children to visit the Library and encourages them to read, to explore various electronic formats, to attend programs and to make full use of library resources. Although staff members are committed to the well-being and safety of children using the library, our facilities are not designed or licensed to provide childcare or emergency care. Any public place may be dangerous for a child who is unattended by a responsible adult or caregiver.

The Library reminds parents to consider the safety and well-being of their children and the needs of other library users. Children should be supervised at all times and taught and reminded that the materials in the library must be respected and treated with care. With these considerations in mind, the following rules apply:

1. Children 10 years and younger in the library must be accompanied by a designated responsible adult or caregiver aged 16 years or older. Children aged 10 or younger may not be left unattended in the library for any amount of time. The responsible caregiver must have contact information for an adult who is legally responsible for the child.
2. Children 5 years old and younger must be directly supervised by a designated responsible adult or caregiver aged 16 or older in all rooms of the library, including the children’s room.
3. Parents/guardians are responsible for the behavior of their children in the library, whether or not the parent/guardian is present.
4. At the discretion of the parent/guardian, a child older than age 10 may be left unattended in the library for a reasonable amount of time to select materials, work on homework, or attend a library program. The child must know how to reach a parent/guardian or responsible caregiver (agreed 16 or older) should the need arise. Children should not be left for excessively long (more than 2 hours) periods of time.
5. When older children are visiting the library by themselves, the adult responsible for the child will be contacted if the child’s behavior is inappropriate for the library and guidance from the staff has been ignored. If the adult cannot be reached, and behavior is deemed dangerous or unacceptably disruptive, the police will be notified.
6. Children must be picked up no later than 5 minutes before closing time. Children left unattended at closing time will have an opportunity to contact an adult. If no contact can be made, or if a ride has not arrived within 10 minutes of closing, the police will be called to supervise the child

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until an adult arrives. Library employees are not permitted to transport children to another location. Adults should note that the library closes at 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and at 3 p.m. on Saturday.

Approved: 8/2021, Trustees

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Signature & Date:</u>
Diana True, Chairperson	
Carol Fournier, Treasurer	
Carol Busby, Secretary	
Julie Drouin, Vice Chair	
Melissa Tiney, Trustee at Large	