

Supervision of Children Policy

Effective date: May 27, 2022

Policy Statement

The trustees and staff of the Sharon Public Library seek to create for children an inviting place to develop a love of books and reading, as well as a place to find materials that serve their informational, educational, and recreational needs. Children are encouraged to visit the library and take advantage of its resources.

The Library Board of Trustees recognizes its obligation to consider the safety and welfare of children while they are in the library. Many children are capable of using the library on their own, and should not be discouraged from doing so. However, some children left alone become frightened or anxious, while others may exhibit behavior inappropriate to the library setting. The following policy statement and accompanying procedures are designed to address the Board's concern for the welfare of children and are not intended to restrict, discourage, or frustrate appropriate use of the library.

To create an environment of safety, and maintain an atmosphere where reading and study can be encouraged, the following policy has been created.

Parents should not use the Library as an alternative to daycare. For safety's sake, parents should make sure that their children are sufficiently mature before allowing them to visit the library by themselves following the policy below. **Parents should also realize that, even in their absence, they are legally responsible for their children's safety and behavior.**

Definitions

Unattended Child: An unattended child is any child in the library alone or a child whose parent or caregiver is in the library but is not adequately 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.

Policy Statement

1. Children of all ages are welcome in the library. However, it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their appropriate behavior.
2. The Library staff is not responsible for the supervision of children left unattended by their parents or caregivers. Staff may bring to the attention of the responsible parent or caregiver behavior that is not appropriate for the library setting or that may place the child in danger, however, Library Staff does not seek out unattended children.
3. Children in grades 4 and under must be accompanied and adequately supervised by a parent, guardian, or other responsible caregivers of at least 14 years of age. This person needs to be with the child at all times and be aware of what the child is doing to avoid danger to the child or

damage to the library's equipment and collections. Exceptions can be made by the Director, Head of Youth Services, or supervisory staff on a case-by-case basis.

4. Children in grades 5 and older may use the library unattended but are subject to the general rules and regulations in effect regarding behavior and conduct.
5. Children may pick up library materials on hold or curbside pickup for their family with a current family member's library card.
6. Teenagers are treated as adult users. However, they are still legally the responsibility of their parents and should have an emergency contact available.
7. Children determined by the staff to be disrupting normal library activities may be given two warnings and may be asked to leave if the behavior persists. Parents leaving children at the the library needs to be aware of this policy and should ensure that their child knows how to reach them or their guardian to arrange to be picked up, or in case of another emergency.
8. If a child is unattended at the library as closing time approaches, the staff will make a reasonable attempt to contact the parent to come and pick up the child. If the parent cannot be reached or is unable to arrive by closing time, the staff will contact the Sharon Police Department to take custody of the child.
9. Library staff members are not authorized to transport any child away from the Library under any circumstances.
10. In the case of a medical emergency involving any child, the staff will call 911 for emergency assistance and then attempt to contact a parent/guardian, in that order.

Inappropriate Behavior

Inappropriate behavior is considered to be behavior that represents physical danger to the child or others, or behavior that interferes with other library users or staff. Behavior that is unacceptable in the library includes, but is not limited to:

- Running, chasing, horseplay
- Screaming, shouting, yelling, swearing, loud laughing, or other noise
- Eating or drinking in unapproved areas
- Continued or frequent loud talking in study areas
- Pushing, hitting, fighting, biting, etc.
- Throwing books, toys, or other objects
- Prolonged crying or temper tantrums
- Bullying or bothering other people
- Jumping on furniture

Library staff will approach disruptive children in the following manner:

If the child is attended to by a parent or guardian, please ask the parent/guardian to speak with their child about this disruptive behavior.

If the child is unattended, give the child a verbal warning. Unattended disruptive children, older than those in grade 5 may be asked to leave the library after a warning is given.