

Norwalk Easter Public Library

Subject: Safe Child and Dependent Adult Policy
Section: Rights, Relationships & Responsibilities

Board

Approved: February 2003
Revised: December 2025
Next Review: December 2028

SAFE CHILD AND DEPENDENT ADULT POLICY

Purpose:

The Norwalk Easter Public Library welcomes all individuals and strives to provide an environment for all to enjoy. The safety and welfare of children and dependent adults at the library is of utmost importance, however, the library is a public building open to all. Dependent adults and young children should be supervised by age appropriate, responsible parties. Parents and caregivers are responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behavior of people in their care while they are in the library. The Library Board and staff respect the rights and privacy of all library patrons. Library staff will intervene only when children or dependent adults are left unattended or when issues relating to safety, disruptive behavior, or well-being occur. Library staff will follow established library procedures for the protection of the party involved and to maintain an environment free from disruption in accordance with the Library Conduct Policy.

Unattended Children/Dependent Adults in the Library

- An unattended child is defined as a minor under the age of 10 who is not accompanied by a parent or caregiver. For the purpose of this policy, a responsible caregiver shall be defined as a person(s) 14 years of age or older. A dependent adult is a person over the age of 18 who is unable to care for themselves.
- The library does not have staff, staff training, or state certification to act as a childcare facility or in lieu of trained staff or family for dependent adults.
- The library staff is not responsible for the care of unattended children and/or dependent adults and does not assume responsibility from the parents or caregivers for providing for the welfare of persons in their care.
- Library staff is not responsible for children or dependent adults interacting with or leaving the library with persons who are not appropriate caregivers.
- Library staff is not responsible for any consequences of parents or caregivers forfeiting their responsibilities.
- Library staff may refer to the police those children or dependent adults who are left unattended in the library when a parent/guardian cannot be reached or if the behavior of the minor child or dependent adult falls outside that of acceptable behavior in the library.

Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities

- Parents or caregivers should remain with and be responsible for the safety and appropriate behavior of the person(s) in their care.
- Children under the age of 10 must be under supervision by a parent or responsible caregiver at all times while in the library. For the purpose of this policy, a responsible caregiver shall be defined as a person(s) 14 years of age or older.
- Children or groups of children visiting the library from any preschool, childcare or babysitting facility must be under supervision at all times by caregivers to ensure safety and to monitor behavior.
- It is not the responsibility of the library staff to monitor anyone's use of the internet or to decide which resources are appropriate. It is the library's policy that parents or caregivers must assume responsibility for deciding what library resources are appropriate for their dependents.

Staff Guidelines

Staff will attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or caregiver to address concerns of lost, unattended, or upset children or dependent adults, or those with conduct issues.

- If the parent or responsible caregiver is not in the library, a staff member will attempt to contact those individuals. When contacted, the parent or caregiver must make arrangements for the child or dependent adult to be picked up immediately.
- If the parent or caregiver cannot be located, or if a contacted parent or caregiver has not picked up their child or dependent adult within 30 minutes of being called, the staff member will contact the police.
- Library staff may not transport or take children or dependent adults outside of the library building.
- For safety reasons, appropriate law enforcement authorities may be contacted at any time to take custody of an unattended child or dependent adult if attempts to contact the parent, legal guardian, or custodian are unsuccessful.
- The library assumes no responsibility for any child or dependent adult left unattended in the library.
- All library patrons are subject to the library's rules of conduct.

Adopted by the Norwalk Easter Public Library February 10, 2003

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