

## **KINNELON PUBLIC LIBRARY SAFE CHILD POLICY**

The Kinnelon Public Library welcomes and encourages children to visit the Library, use Library resources and services, and attend Library programs. Staff members are available to help and support children; however, the Library is not able to provide short- or long-term child care, or be responsible for unattended children.

### **I. Accompanied and Unattended Children**

A. Children aged 10 and under must be accompanied and directly supervised by an adult, at all times, in all areas of the Library and on its grounds.

1. In limited circumstances, children aged 7 to 10 may be permitted to participate in a children's program without a responsible adult in the room, provided: 1 - an adult responsible for the child remains in the Library building at all times during the program, and 2 - the responsible adult first speaks with the staff member responsible for the program and obtains their consent, and 3 - the staff member, in their sole discretion, grants their consent.

2. Parents must be present with a child aged 10 and under during any Library program that takes place outside of the Library building or any off-site location.

B. Children aged 11 to 17 may be in the Library and are free to use the Library without having a responsible adult present on site at the Library, provided their behavior is not disruptive to other patrons, visitors or staff members. Parents are responsible for their minor children's behavior when on Library premises, regardless of whether the parent(s) is/are present in the Library with the child(ren), and regardless of the minor child's age.

C. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child(ren) is/are picked up from the Library prior to the Library's scheduled closing time. Staff will encourage and/or assist minor children in calling for a ride home and will wait in the building with a minor child for up to fifteen (15) minutes past closing time.

1. If a minor child still remains in the Library more than fifteen (15) minutes after closing time, a Library staff member will notify the Kinnelon Police, who will be asked to take charge of the minor child. Once the Police take charge of the minor child, the Library's involvement with the child will end for that day.

D. For purposes of and throughout this Policy, all references to "parent" shall include all biological, adoptive, step and foster parents and legal guardians, and any other authorized responsible adult.

## **II. Behavior in the Library**

A. Children of all ages are expected to conduct themselves appropriately in the Library and are subject to the provisions of the Library's Code of Conduct, to the same extent it applies to all visitors to and patrons of the Library.

1. Children who do not abide by Library policies, or who exhibit unacceptable behavior, will be asked to leave the Library and, particularly if unattended, to call their parent for a ride. If they are unable to reach a parent, or if a ride does not come, Library staff may call the Kinnelon Police.

B. Children who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves, regardless of age, may not be left alone in the Library and must have on site adult supervision in the Library.

C. For purposes of and throughout this Policy, a "responsible adult" must be 18 years or older.

## **III. General Provisions and Disclaimers**

A. The Library is not responsible if any child leaves the Library or Library property unattended.

B. Under no circumstances will a staff member give a child a ride home, take a child outside the building, or remain in the building alone with an unattended child, except if the staff member is an immediate family member of the child (parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, cousin).

C. The goal of the Library is to maintain a welcoming environment that encourages all to explore Library resources and share learning opportunities. The Library wants people of all ages to have a safe, positive experience. Library staff cannot act in loco parentis (acting in the place of a parent) for minor children and cannot accept responsibility for actions taken by or toward unattended children.

D. The Children's area is reserved for children and their parents. Adults may use the Children's area to select and check out materials, assist a child with homework or projects, or when attending a program with a child, but they may not use the computers or study areas in the Children's area.

E. No adult may attend a children's program unless accompanying a child, who is participating in the program.

## **IV. Missing or Lost Child in the Library**

A. If a staff member receives a report of a child lost or missing in the Library, that staff member immediately should ensure that a message goes out to all staff members in the library to go quickly to the nearest exit, including emergency exits. Staff should distribute themselves so that as many exits as possible are covered, at least visually.

The purpose of this directive is to prevent the child from leaving the Library either unattended or in the company of an unauthorized person.

B. When the child is found, a staff member should send out an all-clear message, asking staff members to return to their work stations.

C. If the child is not found or if other suspicious circumstances arise, a supervisor can contact the Kinnelon police for assistance.

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