

M.G. Parker Memorial Library

Safe Child Policy

The Parker Memorial Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for people of all ages. The safety of children left alone in the library is a serious concern of the library staff.

The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children rests with the parent, guardian, or caregiver—and not with the library staff. Therefore, the following rules have been established:

- Children under the age of 12 shall be accompanied and supervised at all times by a parent, guardian, or caregiver who is 16 years or older. Caregivers must remain in the children's room with their child if they are under 12 years of age.
- The parent(s), guardian(s), and/or caregiver(s) of a child under the age of 12 may be contacted immediately upon the discovery of a child being left alone. If the child is not picked up within 20 minutes, Dracut Police will be called to assist.
- Staff members cannot provide supervision of children except during specific Children's Room events.
- Children 12 years or older may use the library unattended provided they are able to follow the library's "Acceptable Use Policy."
- Parents are advised that, even in their absence, they are legally responsible for their child's behavior. The library cannot and will not assume responsibility for any child, unattended or otherwise, either while he/she is in the building or after he/she has exited the premises.
- Parents must be aware of the library's hours and must arrange to pick up their children by closing. In cases of an unaccompanied child at normal or emergency closings, the library staff will respond using the following protocol:
 - Library staff will not transport or escort the child to any location off the premises.
 - Library staff will assist a child with contacting an adult for transportation 30 minutes before closing.
 - A child under the age of 12 will not be left unattended at closing. Library staff will contact the Police Department to come and pick up the child.
 - Two staff members will wait with the child until the parent(s), guardian(s), caregiver(s), or the Police pick him/her up. As a result, the parent(s), guardian(s), and/or caregiver(s) will be mailed notification of Safe Child and Appropriate Library Use Policy.

Missing Child

If a child is reported missing to a staff member, they will obtain a detailed description of the child and notify all other staff in the building to cover all exits and search the building for the child. If the child is not located within ten minutes, staff will contact the Dracut Police Department.

Unaccompanied Adults

Parents and guardians are welcome in the Children's area when accompanied by children and/or to attend a program with their child.

- If an unaccompanied adult requires access to the children's collection, we ask that they limit their use to 15 minutes.
- Library staff may make exceptions to the 15-minute allotted period for unaccompanied adults who are teachers, daycare providers or others who require access to the children's collection for research or other educational purposes.
- If an adult with no accompanying child is observed by staff to be spending more than the 15-minute allotted period in the children's room, they will be reminded of this policy and asked to patronize a different part of the library.
- Adults without an accompanying child are not permitted to attend children's programs. Programs may require an adult to attend alongside their child, but adults are not permitted to attend children's programs alone.

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on May 11, 2011.

Amended on September 13, 2023.