

## **Child Safety Policy**

The Library Trustees and staff are dedicated to providing a safe environment that encourages children of all ages to visit the library, attend programs, and use the library resources and computers. The trustees and staff request that parents/guardians/caregivers consider the safety and wellbeing of their children and the needs of other library users by cooperating with the following:

### **Basic Safety Considerations:**

1. The parent/guardian/caregiver is responsible for the safety, behavior, and supervision of their children.
2. The library staff does not act in place of parents (in loco parentis).
3. The library is not designed or licensed to provide child care. The library is not a closed environment and staff members cannot monitor everyone who enters or leaves the library premises.
4. The library staff members are available to help and support children. Though staff will always respond with care and concern, they cannot assume responsibility for the child's safety and comfort.

### **Behavior/Conduct:**

1. Like all library users, children are expected to comply with the Patron Use Policy.
2. Behaviors that could potentially result in injury, or be disruptive to library patrons, are not permitted. Such behaviors include, but are not limited to, running, jumping, climbing, shouting, pushing, hitting, throwing objects, or disrupting/damaging displays or on-going activities.
3. The library staff reserves the right to speak to the child and parent/guardian/caregiver about disruptive/unsafe behavior and request that it stop.

### **Unattended Children:**

1. For the purpose of this policy, an unattended child refers to a child who is in the library alone without parent/guardian/caregiver supervision.
2. Children age 9 years old and younger must be accompanied by a responsible adult or caregiver aged 16 or older. Children aged 9 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.
3. Children 5 years old and younger must be directly supervised by a responsible adult or caregiver age 16 or older in all rooms of the library, including the children's room.
4. The parent/guardian/caregiver should be aware of the library closing hours. Children left unattended at closing time will have the opportunity to contact an adult. If no contact can be made, the library staff reserves the right to determine how long to stay with the child in the library past closing. If no contact can be made after a reasonable amount of time has lapsed the staff member will notify the Newington Police Department to take custody of the child.

**Computer Use:**

1. The library has public internet computers and open wireless internet access, which are not filtered or password protected.
2. Children increasingly use the internet as a source of both fun and education. While it is a wonderful resource, there can be inherent dangers attached to using the internet. The library staff do not monitor what a child is accessing on the computer.

**Missing Child:**

1. If it is suspected or reported that a child is missing, the staff members will do an immediate and rapid search of the building while calling out to the child.
2. If the child is not located after completing the search, a staff member will immediately call 911.

Reviewed and approved by the board of trustees April 18, 2019