

### **Children in the Library Policy**

- Responsibility for the safety of children using the Library rests at all times with the parents, guardians, or caregivers.
- According to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Section 39, leaving any child under 10 years old alone inside or outside any building is considered abandonment. No child under 10 years old should be left unattended in the Children's Room or elsewhere in the library.
- A parent, guardian, or caregiver of children under age 10 must be in close physical proximity to the child, actively watching the child and be visible to the child, except when the child is attending a library program independently or a child 6 years or older is using the STEAM Center independently. Adults with children under age 10 who do not attend a library program with the child must remain in the library building and must return to the Children's Room or the Community Room, as the case may be, by the end of the program. Adults with children age 6 and over (and under age 10) who are using the STEAM Center independently must remain in the Children's Room and are still responsible for the child.
- While supervising a child in the Children's Room, the parent, guardian, or caregiver must be ready and able to guide and correct the child as necessary.
- Teens and adults who are able to self-regulate their behavior and who are using children's materials are allowed to use the Children's Room, as long as they are not causing any disruption. Adults (not accompanied by a child) who are not utilizing the collection will be asked to relocate to the Adult, Circulation, or Reference Departments.
- A Responsible adult must remain in the immediate vicinity and be in direct visual contact with children who require supervision, regardless of age.
- Adults unaccompanied by a child are not permitted to participate in programs designated for children without permission from Children's staff.
- Parents, guardians, or caregivers and children should be aware of library opening and closing times and realize there may be times when the building has to close unexpectedly. Do not leave children alone outside the library building before opening or after closing.
- The parent, guardian, or caregiver is responsible for insuring that their children behave appropriately while in the library and should not allow disruptive behavior. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to: shouting; running; chasing; jumping; climbing; horseplay; pushing; throwing; hitting; biting; eating; fighting; pestering other people; prolonged crying or temper tantrums; foul language; pounding on computer keyboards; inappropriate use of furniture, toys or materials; behavior that disturbs others; and behavior that hinders or prevents the intended use of the library and its materials or interferes with staff.

- Children exhibiting inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the library. All unaccompanied children at the library should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency. Unattended children will be asked about transportation approximately 15 minutes before closing. Police may be called to take charge of children who have not been picked up within 15 minutes after closing.
- At the discretion of a responsible adult, a child 10 years old or older may use the library independently, but not during regular school hours, unless he/she can provide evidence of being home-schooled.
- Parents who wish their children not to have access to certain types of materials should accompany their children to the library and monitor their use of its resources.
- Parents assume all liability for damage done by their children to the library facility, equipment, furnishings, or materials.

November 10, 2020

Amended December 8, 2020