SAFE CHILD POLICY

The Woburn Public Library is dedicated to providing a warm, welcoming, and safe environment for people of all ages. This requires everyone to follow the **Library Code of Conduct** and policies adopted by the Library Board of Trustees posted throughout the library, and on the Library's website.

While Library staff use their very best judgement to make every attempt to create a safe environment for all users, it is important to note that the library is a public building, and as such can be an unsafe place for children. **Ultimately the responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with Library staff.**

The Library staff is here strictly to assist children with their library needs; **the Library staff does not perform childcare**. **Library staff cannot take the place of parents/caregiver, nor can they assume responsibility for unsupervised children**.

To ensure the protection and wellbeing of our young patrons, the following policies have been established:

Use of Youth Spaces

1. The Children's Room is primarily for children, ages 11 and under or through Grade 5, and their parents/caregivers. The Teen Room is primarily for youth ages 12-18 or Grades 6-12. Adults not accompanying a child or youth who are not actively using or searching the youth collections or seeking help from staff are not allowed in the Children's or Teen Rooms, regardless of whether a minor is present in the space. Such adults will be asked to move to the Adult Services section.
2. Computers in the Children's Room are reserved for the use of children only. Parents/caregivers may check out laptops for use in the Children's Area if necessary.

Youth programs and events in spaces other than the Children's and Teen Rooms are covered by this policy. Adults (19 and older) who are not accompanying a child will not be allowed to attend Youth events without permission from Library staff.

Unattended Children

1. **All children under nine years of age must be accompanied by a parent/caregiver and adequately supervised at all times. A responsible caregiver is defined as an individual age 13 and over who is entrusted with the care of a minor child.**
    a. Preschool children ages four and under must always be closely supervised ("**within sight**") by a parent/caregiver.

b. Children between the ages of five and eight must be directly supervised (in the same room or area of the library) by a parent/caregiver. **Parents/Caregivers must remain in the building while a child is attending a Library program.**

c. Children ages 9 and older may be left unattended in the library, excluding the Mezzanine level of the library. Children under the age of 18 are not allowed on the Mezzanine without an adult/caregiver present.

d. If Library staff determine a child is lost or unattended, Library staff reserve the right to contact the Woburn Police Department for assistance.

2. **Children ages nine and older left unattended must be mature enough to follow the Library's Code of Conduct Policy.** Consequences for violating this policy may include being asked to leave the library. As a general rule, if a parent or guardian feels a child is not mature enough to be left home alone without supervision, or to leave the library building alone, they are not mature enough to be left unattended in the library.

    a. All children not accompanied by a parent/caregiver should have a means of contact for said parent/caregiver to be used in the event of an emergency such as unexpected Library closure.

    b. Any unattended child in the building at closing must immediately contact their parent/caregiver for transportation. They should also inform Library staff that they have contacted their parent/caregiver.

    c. Two staff members will remain with any child waiting for pick-up outside the Library for 10 minutes. If parent/caregiver does not arrive within 10 minutes of the Library's closing time or cannot be reached, the Woburn Police Department will be called to take custody of the child until the parent/caregiver can be located. A copy of this *Safe Child Policy* will be given to the police to give to the parent/caregiver when they pick up the child. **Under no circumstances may staff transport children from the Library to any location.**

General

Disruptive and/or inappropriate behavior by children will not be tolerated. Disruptive and/or inappropriate behavior includes anything that interferes with other patrons' enjoyment or use of the Library and/or causes actual or potential damage to Library property. Examples of this behavior include but are not limited to: running, shouting, screaming, throwing objects, pulling large numbers of books from shelves without intending to use them, jumping or climbing on library furniture, banging on computer keyboards, or otherwise interfering with other patrons' use of the library.

Should Library staff determine that a child is being disruptive or inappropriate, the child will be given a warning which will include notice that a second warning will result in ejection of the child and accompanying parent/caregiver, if any, from the Library. If ejection is necessary, a reasonable attempt will be made to notify a parent/caregiver of an unattended child.

Approved by the Woburn Public Library Board of Trustees, September 11, 2018, Amended, November 18, 2025 and revised March 10, 2026.