

# PARCHMENT COMMUNITY LIBRARY

## CHILD SAFETY POLICY

One of the most important services of the library is to provide a place for children to encounter the wealth of knowledge our world has to offer. Hence, children are welcomed and encouraged to use library facilities and services. However, the responsibility for the care, safety and behavior of children using the library rests with the parent/guardian or caregiver. A “caregiver” is defined as a responsible person at least 12 years of age.

Library staff members have many duties and cannot supervise children nor act as a substitute for daycare.

If parents or caregivers neglect to supervise their children, library staff will request the parent/caregiver to exercise supervision. If this verbal request fails to correct the situation, the library staff shall take the following steps:

- a. Issue a verbal warning, advising that the person will be asked to leave if the behavior in question does not cease.
- b. If the behavior continues, request that the person(s) leave the library property. Whenever possible, this should be done by the director or senior staff member.
- c. If the patron fails to leave library property, the police will be called. When the disruptive patron is a juvenile, the staff may elect to notify the juvenile’s parent or guardian in lieu of calling the police. Whenever possible, this should be done by the director or senior staff member.
- d. An Incident Form shall be filed for all incidents which require steps b or c.

Children through age 7 must have a parent or caregiver in the immediate vicinity unless they are participating in a library program. Parents or caregivers for children through age 7 or under who do not attend the program with the child should remain in the building. At times staff may ask that the parent or caregiver stay in the room during the library program.

Children 8 and older may use the library unattended for an amount of time appropriate to their age and maturity. It is important for staff to take note of disruptions caused by minors who apparently are unaccompanied. Parents are responsible for the actions of their children. Children using inappropriate behavior will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child shall be asked to leave the Library. If a child in this age group is unaccompanied by an adult or appropriate-aged caregiver, the staff will follow the directions below for children found on library premises without a parent or caregiver. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

The library staff cannot take responsibility for the care of any child.

If a child is found without a parent or caregiver, the staff will:

- a. Attempt to comfort the child, if necessary.
- b. Locate the parent or caregiver in the library and explain the Child Safety Policy.
- c. Make every effort to contact the parent or caregiver who is not in the library to come and pick up the child. Staff will express the library's concern for the child's safety and explain the Child Safety Policy.
- d. if the parent or caregiver cannot be located within 30 minutes, call the local police to pick up the child. Staff will notify the director that the police have been called.
- e. Encourage an unattended child to contact the parent or caregiver if it is within 30 minutes of closing time. If a parent or caregiver cannot be reached or does not arrive within 10 minutes after closing, library staff will call the local police to pick up the child. Staff will notify the director that the police have been called, and will file an Incident Form.
- f. Remain with the child until the parent or caregiver or police arrive. This is compensated time for the two staff members who remain with the child.
- g. Leave a note on the library door stating "Unattended child is in the custody of the police." Names will not be listed on the sign.
- h. Never transport any child from the library to another location.

Approved November 25, 2003

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