

Children's Safety Policy

The goal of the Trustees and the staff of Stoneham Public Library is to provide a warm and nurturing place where children are welcome to develop their love of reading in a safe and inviting atmosphere. Children of all ages are welcome to Stoneham Public Library. While it is the policy of the library to maintain a safe environment, the staff is not able to assume the responsibility for the safety and well-being of any child. The library is a public building, open to all. Parents and caregivers must remain vigilant at all times. *The library staff cannot act as supervisors of child patrons and are not liable for their care.*

- 1. Supervision: Children age 9 and under** must be directly supervised by a parent, caregiver, or guardian (someone who is at least 14 years of age). **Children 11 and older** may be allowed in the library without an adult; they should know a phone number of an adult that staff can call in the event of an emergency.

It is the responsibility of the child and their caregiver(s) to know the library's hours. If a child under 11 is left at the library unattended at closing, two staff members will remain until their caregiver(s) pick them up. Staff will make a reasonable attempt to contact the child's caregiver(s). Should they be unable to reach them, the Stoneham Police Department will be notified 30 minutes after closing. Stoneham Police will accompany the child to Stoneham Police Station and give caregiver(s) a copy of our safe child policy. Under no circumstances can staff drive or accompany a child to a new location.

- 2. Emergencies:** Due to weather and various unforeseeable circumstances, the library may close outside of its scheduled hours. In this case, staff will follow the aforementioned procedure.
- 3. Behavior:** Children who are disruptive will be asked to cease their disruptive behavior/leave the library. *Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, anything that may cause harm to oneself, someone else, or the library space.* It is at the discretion of the staff to step in for situations they deem disruptive. Children will be given two warnings prior to being asked to leave for the day.
- 4. Unattended Adults:** For the safety and comfort of children and their families, adults who are not accompanied by a child, actively searching the collection, or there for circulation purposes will be redirected to use the adult services section of the library. This policy extends to the young adult space after 2pm during the school week and any children's programs. Staff reserves the right to ask if you are accompanied by a child.
- 5. Bathroom:** The children's bathroom is only to be used by patrons attending junior library programs or using the junior library space. Adults who fall under this category are caregivers, parents, tutors, or guardians. Staff reserves the right to make exceptions to this rule under extenuating circumstances.