Norton Public Library

BEHAVIOR & SAFETY POLICY - CHILDREN

Child patrons are described as being seventeen years of age or younger. The Library exists for the use by adults as well as children; therefore the Library Staff should guide and encourage child patrons toward acceptable library behavior.

RULES OF CONDUCT IN THE LIBRARY

All rules of conduct stated in the general Behavior Policy apply to the behavior of children/teens.
The following additional rules also apply to unaccompanied children:

- The staff will give warning of inappropriate behavior to the child.
- The staff will explain the rules and may offer alternatives.
- If the behavior persists after explanation and repeated warnings, the child/teen may be asked to leave for the rest of the day.
- If the child/teen refuses to follow the requests of the staff, or the staff feels there is potential danger to patrons or staff, the police and/or parent/legal guardian may be called.

SAFETY OF CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY

The staff of the Norton Public Library is concerned about the safety and well-being of all our patrons. We welcome all children and offer many programs to encourage lifelong learning. However, the Library is a public building and available to anyone. It should not be assumed that young children are safe when left unattended in the Library. The staff cannot know if children are leaving the building with parents or with strangers. Due to the many responsibilities of the library staff, monitoring each child's behavior and location is not possible. Library staff does not and will not take over parental responsibilities for children when they come into the library.
Parents/caregivers/guardians are responsible for the behavior of their children in the Library and may not leave children under the age of ten alone in the building. Children under the age of six must be attended at all times.
Lost or frightened unattended children should be brought to the Youth Services Librarian or to the Circulation Desk. A staff member shall stay with the child until the

parent/caregiver/guardian is located. Staff should try to locate the appropriate adult by walking through the library with the child.

If a problem arises with children of any age and we are unable to locate a parent/caregiver/legal guardian, the police will be called at the discretion of the staff.

Children age 10 and older may be left unattended (at the discretion of their parent/guardian.) The Library staff or Trustees are not responsible for the safety or protection of these children. Children left unattended should know how to reach a parent or guardian and parents should be aware of the closing time of the Library. Children should wait inside the building to be picked up, for safety sake.

Library staff will not transport children from the library to another location, except in cases of extreme emergency.

Thirty minutes before closing, the staff shall urge all children to contact their parent/caregiver/guardian. If a young person is still at the library at closing, two staff members will remain in the library and attempt to reach the parent/caregiver/guardian. If the child has not been picked up after 15 minutes beyond closing to the public, or if both staff members are unable to stay, the police will be called to pick up the child/teen. In no instance will staff take children or teenagers home.

In case of medical emergency, when parent/caregiver cannot be reached, staff should call 911.

Staff judgment and discretion will be used at all times in the interpretation of the above rules.

Revised by the Board of Trustees 6/11/2013