

# Child Supervision Policy:

Newton Public Library encourages children to visit and use the library, to encourage a lifelong love of books, reading and libraries.

The library staff works to ensure the safety of children in the library; however, their duties prevent them from being able to supervise individual children left in the library facility. When children are using the library, it is the responsibility of the parents or guardians, not the library staff, to supervise their children. Parents may designate a responsible person (age 14 or older) to act as their representative for a child in the library. This representative must carry emergency contact information.

## Supervision:

“Supervise” means that a parent or responsible parent’s representative is with the child in the library and is ensuring:

1. That children act in accordance with library rules.
2. That children’s behavior does not present a safety hazard to themselves, other users, or library property.
3. That children’s behavior does not interfere with the use of the library by others.

## Age guidelines:

The following age guidelines have been established to ensure that children are safe and cared for while in the library:

- Children 5 and younger: A parent or representative must remain with them at all times, in the same room or area of the library, including during library-sponsored programs supervised by library staff.
- Children 6-8: A parent or representative must remain in the building for the duration of the child’s visit, except while the child is attending a library-sponsored program supervised by library staff.
- Children 9-13: Children of these ages can use the library unattended only if they have a current library card with parent/guardian contact information and a photo on file. Unsupervised children must have their library card on them each and every time they are in the library and must check in at the front desk. If a child loses their library card, he/she will need to purchase a new card for \$2 before being allowed to stay. Children should not be left alone for more than three hours, even with a library card.

## Staff interventions:

- Children are required to adhere to the full Patron Code of Conduct, which bars such conduct as running, throwing things, abusive or loud language, and misuse or damage of library furnishings or materials. All patrons must listen to and follow all staff directives.
- Staff who observe behaviors that violate the Code of Conduct will remind children of library rules. Children may be asked to leave the library for the day if they are not following library rules.
- Egregious conduct or repeatedly not following rules may result children not being allowed in the library for a longer period of time. In such cases, a phone call with the child’s parents will be required before the child is allowed back unsupervised.
- Parents are responsible for any damage their child does to library property, whether the parent is or is not present at the library.
- Library staff will make a reasonable attempt to notify parents, guardians, or caregivers in the event that a child is disruptive, becomes ill or injured, or is deemed to be at risk of harm (i.e.: is left at the library when it closes), or if an emergency occurs at the library (i.e.: fire). However, it may be necessary to notify law enforcement or emergency medical personnel for assistance in such situations.
- Since staff members are unable to authenticate the relationship between a caller and a child, for the protection of the child, staff cannot answer phone inquiries about whether a child is in the building. In the case of an emergency, staff members are authorized to take the name of the caller and a phone number and will attempt to locate the child (or adult) and deliver the message.