

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Purpose of Policy:

The Brown County Library welcomes children to use its facilities and services. Because Brown County Library locations are busy public places open to all, parents/guardians or caregivers are always responsible for their children, the care of their children, and the acts of their children to ensure their children's well-being.

The Brown County Library shall not be responsible or liable in any way for consequences of parents/guardians or caregivers forfeiting their responsibilities. Library staff cannot take responsibility for the care of children of any age. The public library, unlike schools, does not serve *in loco parentis* (in place of a parent). Library staff cannot act in the place of parents, nor can they act as a substitute for daycare in providing constant care and supervision. Therefore, responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children using the library rests with the parent/guardian or caregiver. A caregiver must be at least 13 years of age.

Parents/guardians are reminded that unexpected events can occur while children are left unattended. Examples include but are not limited to: the child could wander out of the building on his/her own, the child could be approached by untrustworthy people, or the child could be physically injured.

Requirements and Responsibilities:

- A. All children must abide by the rules in the Appropriate Library Behavior Policy. The safety and behavior of children under age 18 on library premises is the responsibility of the parent/guardian whether or not the parent/guardian accompanies the child.
 - i. This responsibility includes a child's use of library computers with access to the Internet. (See [Internet and Public Computer Acceptable Use](#) policy.)
- B. All children under the age of 9 years old must be attentively supervised at all times when at the library by a parent/legal guardian, or by the parent/guardian's designated, responsible caregiver who is at least 13 years old.
 - i. The parent/caregiver should remain in the immediate vicinity of the child and must monitor and guide the child's behavior and activities.
 - ii. The parent/caregiver should adjust the length of the library visit to suit the attention span and behavior of the child.
 - iii. Children age 9 – 18 may use the Library unaccompanied by a parent/guardian or caregiver as long as they abide by the library rules. Staff will take note of disruptions caused by children who are apparently unaccompanied, as well as taking note of children whose maturity level demands additional attention beyond what their age

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

typically requires. Parents/guardians are always responsible for the actions of their children and will be notified as needed.

- C. It may be necessary that a child be supervised at all times by a parent or caregiver for the child to abide by the library rules, such as when a child has additional needs related to physical or mental ability, inconsistent behavior patterns, emotional outbursts, lack of adequate attention span, or incomplete social skills, that prevent the child from following the rules or enjoying the library visit on their own. Shorter library visits may be necessary.
- D. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency or pick them up from the library if needed. It is important that all children have a library card with up-to-date home and work telephone numbers of parents/guardians on the library card account.
- E. Children known to be sick should be kept/taken home for their own health and safety, and the health and safety of others.
- F. Children behaving inappropriately will be informed of the rules. Parents or caregivers accompanying the child(ren) will be informed of the rules as well. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child shall be asked to leave the library.
- G. Every effort will be made to contact a parent/ guardian if it is noticed that an unsupervised child suspected to be under the age of 13 is asked to leave the library due to behavior or due to closing of the library. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached to pick up the child, or if the parent/guardian has not picked up the child within 15 minutes of library closure, the local police department will be called to pick up the child.

Library Staff Actions:

- A. When necessary, staff will ask children to leave the library due to closing time or inappropriate behavior by the child.
- B. Library staff will use reasonable judgment when estimating the age of children. The library will not require children to prove their age for library use; however, if behavior issues arise, or if library staff suspects a young child is unsupervised, they will work with the child to determine their age in an effort to enforce this policy.
- C. Library staff and/or security guards will take action if they are aware of a child that appears to be at risk of harm; lacks adequate supervision; appears ill or upset while unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver; engages in disruptive behavior; or appears unprepared to get home safely. Depending on the circumstances, action may include:
 - i. Attempting to contact/locate the parent/legal guardian to address the issue. Follow-up letters may be sent if contact information is known.
 - ii. Informing the child(ren) and/or their parent(s)/caregiver(s) of the relevant library behavior expectations.

10-20-2016	POL	E-3
CHILD SAFETY		

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

- iii. Restricting or suspending library privileges for the child(ren) and/or family members. For serious issues, library staff may direct the child(ren) and/or the parent(s)/caregiver(s) to leave the library immediately with no prior warning.
- iv. Contacting the police or child protection authorities.
- D. Library staff cannot transport or escort a child to any location off library property.

This policy replaces any previous policy regarding Child Safety.