

## **Leominster Public Library Child Safety Policy**

**Rationale:** This policy is to inform caregivers of the rules and regulations regarding children using the library.

**Policy Statement:** The Leominster Public Library welcomes children to use its facility and services. Many children are capable of using the Library appropriately on their own, and should not be discouraged from doing so. However, parents should remember that the Library is a public building available for anyone to use. The Library recognizes its obligation to consider the safety and welfare of children while they are in the Library. While libraries carry with them an illusion of safety, public libraries, by their nature, are subject to “stranger danger” and are not necessarily safe for unattended children. We recommend that caregivers discuss personal safety with their children. The library staff is not responsible for unattended children in the library.

### **Guidelines for Children Using the Library:**

- Children under the age of 10 must be accompanied and directly supervised at all times by a responsible caregiver, including during Library programs.
- Accompanied is defined as “within sight and attentive to the child.”
- A responsible caregiver is defined as a person age 13 or older who is entrusted with the care of a minor child.
- Children age 10 and older may be left unattended for a maximum of 4 hours in any calendar day, provided they are able to maintain proper library behavior. The Leominster Public Library assumes no responsibility for children of any age left unattended at the Library. Out of concern for the well-being of the community’s children, the Board of Trustees and the Library staff affirm that the staff does not take the place of parents, act as caregiver or babysitter, and cannot be responsible for problems (incidents, accidents or other liability) resulting from children left unattended.
- Caregivers should make sure that children have their contact information with them.
- If a child is left unattended for an unreasonable amount of time, caregivers will be contacted.
- The library assumes no responsibility for children outside the library building at any time.
- Caregivers assume all liability for damage done by their children to the library facility, equipment and materials. Caregivers should be aware that even in their absence they are legally responsible for their children’s behavior.
- In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called.
- Caregivers should be aware of the opening and closing hours of the Library. If a child is alone in the library at closing, library staff will call the caregiver. At least two full-time staff members will remain with the child. If staff cannot reach a caregiver and a period of 15 minutes has elapsed, a staff person will call the police to assume responsibility for the child. Staff members are not permitted to transport or take a child away from the library. Once the child is under supervision of a police officer, staff members may leave.
- For the safety of all children, adults who are not accompanied by children are to use the Children’s Room only for the purpose of retrieving materials for check out or to make arrangements to retrieve materials in other areas of the library.

Library staff has the right to address issues related to child safety as they arise. We appreciate your adherence to these guidelines for the safety of all children in the library.

*Approved by the Trustees: 7/9/18  
Amended: 11/14/22*