

ACTON PUBLIC LIBRARY CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Purpose:

The Acton Public Library is a department of the Town of Old Saybrook and is a taxpayer-supported institution. As a result, the Library Board is responsible for establishing policies and rules of conduct to protect the rights and safety of all library patrons, volunteers, and staff, and for preserving and protecting the Library's materials, equipment, facilities, and grounds.

In accordance with Connecticut State Statute 53-21a, children under 12 must be accompanied by a responsible adult, 18 years of age or older. At all times, caregivers are responsible for the conduct and safety of their children on Library premises. Caregivers must provide appropriate supervision based on the ages, abilities, and the levels of capability of their children.

This Child Safety Policy defines permissible and non-permissible use of the Children's Room facilities and equipment at the Acton Public Library and the scope of the staff's responsibility to minors. This policy is an extension of the Code of Conduct and the conduct expectations for all library patrons, volunteers, and staff.

Permissible and non-permissible Children's Room use includes, but is not limited to:

All children under 12 must be accompanied by a responsible adult age 18 or older when using the Children's Room. The responsible adult must remain in the Children's Room with the child or children at all times.

The Children's Room is reserved for the use of children and developmentally delayed adults. Adults unaccompanied by a child may use the Children's Room only if they are looking for materials to check out and they must leave the room once they have located the items. Adults unaccompanied by a child may not use the Children's Room to lounge. Any adult found in the Children's Room not supervising a child or browsing for materials to check out will be asked to leave immediately.

The use of the children's computers is restricted to children under the age of 12.

Patrons on the sex offender registry are not permitted in the Children's Room.

Adults unaccompanied by a child are prohibited from using the restroom in the Children's Room.

Unattended Children:

Parents should be aware that the Library is a public building open to all individuals. It is not the Library staff's function to provide supervision for children or to care for children while parents or caregivers are outside the Library. The Library staff is not authorized to act in place of parents. Staff members are responsible for assisting all Library patrons and cannot monitor unattended children. Staff will not monitor unsupervised children at the point that they are leaving the Library.

Parents, guardians and caregivers are referred to Connecticut General Statute Section 53-21a - Leaving child unsupervised in place of public accommodation or motor vehicle.

(a) Any parent, guardian or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, of any child under the age of twelve years who knowingly leaves such child unsupervised in a place of public accommodation or a motor vehicle for a period of time that presents a substantial risk to the child's health or safety, shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

Unattended Children, Closings:

Caregivers are expected to be aware of the opening and closing times of the Library, bearing in mind that these times can and do change. Sudden emergencies may occur in the Library and in such cases the Library assumes no responsibility for unattended children. Power failures or other emergencies can occur and require unexpected closing of the building. Parents, guardians, and caregivers should be sure that their charges know what to do or where to go when the Library closes.

If a child is left at the library after regular closing time or on the occasion of an of an emergency closing, staff will attempt to contact a parent or guardian. If no responsible person can be contacted, the police will be called. Under no circumstances will library staff escort a child off library property or transport children to another location. A minimum of two library staff will remain with the child until a parent/guardian/caregiver or the police arrive.

Violations of this policy will result in increasing levels of action, ranging from a verbal request asking the patron to leave the Library for the remainder of the day, to the enforcement of permanent loss of library privileges, to legal prosecution.

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