

SAFE CHILD POLICY

See *also*: the Unattended Child policy and the Internet Safety and Use policy

This Safe Child Policy was created to minimize the safety risk to children in the library.

GENERAL:

Library personnel are not able to assume caregiver or childcare responsibilities for children who come into the library.

It is the right and responsibility of a caregiver to determine what is appropriate material in order to meet personal family standards and guidelines. Therefore, those desiring to make that determination are encouraged to accompany their children and to select material with their children or review their children's selections. The library is not responsible for a minor's selection of or exposure to print or electronic library materials.

Library personnel and volunteers will be screened according to City of Columbus and library policy. Library personnel and volunteers who work with other agencies who may be housed in the library facility may be screened according to City of Columbus and library policy at the tenant agency's expense.

Patrons will have access to public areas only. To the extent that building design permits, nonpublic areas will be closed off.

Age specific areas of the facility & services have been established. When those spaces are not in use by their primary audience, limited use is permitted for those outside that age group, at the discretion of library personnel.

LIBRARY PERSONNEL AND VOLUNTEER (OF ANY AGE) CONDUCT BOTH ON AND OFFSITE:

The Library expects exemplary behavior by all its library personnel and volunteers.

- Touching should be in response to the need of the child, not the need of the adult.
- Touching should be with the child's permission.
- Resistance to touching must be respected.
- Touching must never include the breast, buttocks, or groin.
- Touching should be done in the open, not in private.
- Touching should have a brief, limited duration.

While engaged in library service library personnel and volunteers will not:

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while volunteering.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap children and/or youth.
- Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and/or youth.

- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade children and/or youth.
- Use abusive statements such as those that deal with race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender, age, sex, or sexual orientation. In addition, physical, emotional, sexual, and ethical abuses are prohibited, as is neglect or endangerment of a child.

If children attempt to climb into the lap of a volunteer or library personnel, they should be gently set aside or given to their caregiver.

Library personnel and volunteers will not be in one-on-one no-visibility situations with children or young people. Doors are not permitted to be closed for one-on-one conversations, assistance, tutoring, etcetera, unless there is a window in the door. Library personnel and volunteers will always be observable in interactions with children and young people.

Library personnel and volunteers will never conduct alone an after-hours program involving children or youth.

It is understood that library personnel and volunteers may have legitimate relationships with minors outside of their contact at the library (e.g. neighbors, family friends, church work, etc.). However, where such an offsite personal relationship does not exist, library personnel and volunteers may socialize with or contact children and youth they have met at the library providing they have parental or guardian permission, are conducting library business, or are in a public arena.

Library personnel and volunteers are not permitted to remain alone after closing time with a child. Library personnel or volunteers will not give a child a ride home. Library personnel and volunteers will not transport children to or from offsite activities without advanced, written permission from the parent or guardian, at the discretion of the Library Director.

Library personnel and adult volunteers are mandatory reporters under the law. Any library personnel or adult volunteer who witnesses child abuse will call law enforcement and then report the incident to the Library Director and the Abuse/Neglect Hotline 1-800-652-1999. Library personnel and adult volunteers who suspects child abuse or neglect will call the Abuse/Neglect Hotline 1-800-652-1999. Depending on the circumstances, local law enforcement may also be called.

“Any person who willfully fails to make any report shall be guilty of a Class III misdemeanor.”

For more information Nebraska Revised Statutes §§ 28-710, 28-711, 28-717

<http://uniweb.legislature.ne.gov/laws/laws.php>

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