



STEVENS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

## Safe Child Policy

The Stevens Memorial Library strives to create a warm, inviting, fun environment for children of all ages. The library offers many programs and services that encourage children to develop a love of books, reading and learning. The library attempts to provide a safe environment for children to foster creativity, select books and other materials, and to participate in library programs. The safety and well-being of children at the library is of serious concern. Young children are safest when supervised by a parent or caregiver while in the library. Parents should remember that the library is a public building available for the use of all.

For the protection and well-being of children who enjoy libraries, the following policy has been established: All children under the age of 10 must be accompanied and continually supervised by a parent or caregiver while in the library. The Stevens Memorial Library recommends that children under the age of 13 not be left alone in the library.

Children under the age of 10 must be accompanied by an adult on the elevator.

Parents or caregivers, not library staff, are responsible for the actions and safety of children visiting the library.

Parents or caregivers must stay with their child under age 10 while attending a library-sponsored program. Depending on the program, parents or caregivers may be permitted to leave the room, but they must stay in the building.

At the discretion of a responsible adult, a child age 10 or older may be left unattended for the period of time needed to select materials, complete a homework assignment, or attend a program.

- The child must know how to reach the responsible adult in case this need should arise.
- Children should not be left for excessively long (more than 2 hours) periods of time.
- Children will be expected to display appropriate behavior, conducive to maintaining a civil atmosphere in the library for all patrons.

The parent or caregiver is responsible for insuring the appropriate behavior of their children in the library. Disruptive behavior, such as shouting, running, pushing, or other loud or physical activities, is not acceptable. Children who continue to be disruptive will be asked to leave the building. In the case of an unaccompanied child, library staff will

attempt to contact a family member or caregiver to pick them up. If a family member or caregiver cannot be reached, the Ashburnham Police Department will be contacted at the discretion of library staff. The parent or caregiver is liable for all damage done by their children to the library facility or equipment.

The library cannot assume responsibility for children while a parent or caregiver is participating in a library program or other activity in the library.

Shoes and shirts must be worn while in the library. (Toddlers who are walking need to have shoes on.)

Food and beverages in closed containers may not be consumed in the Children's Room but may be consumed in the Activity Room when available.

It is the responsibility of a parent or caregiver to ensure appropriate use of computers and other electronic library resources by young children. Please be aware that internet access on library computers may be unfiltered. The library staff cannot monitor sites visited.

#### Children Left at Closing:

Children and their adult caregivers should be aware of the closing times of the library. If a child has been left at the library without a ride or assistance home at closing time, every attempt will be made to contact a family member or caregiver by telephone. If a family member or caregiver cannot be reached within 30 minutes of closing, the Ashburnham Police will be called to escort the child home or to keep the child until parents can be reached, and an Incident Report will be filed. Families who routinely leave their children past closing time will no longer be permitted to leave children at the library without transportation.

Teenagers are considered adult users for the purposes of this policy. However, they are the legal responsibility of their parent/legal guardian and should have an emergency contact available.

*Approved by Library Board of Trustees, April 2015*

*Revised and Updated April 2020*