

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

In an effort to provide a comfortable and safe environment for all who use the Merrick Public Library, the Library Board of Trustees has adopted a policy regarding unattended children and child safety.

Unattended Children

1. The safety of children left alone in the building is a serious concern. It is up to the parents or caregivers to attend young children at all times. Library staff and volunteers are NOT responsible for children who are left unattended.
 - a. Parents or caregivers may not leave children age 11 or under unattended in the library.
 - b. Children of middle and high school age (e.g. age 12 to 17) may be left unattended for periods of time when attending library programs, doing research for school projects, or finding materials to check out. Parents and guardians are expected to be aware that their child is at the library. Children will be expected to display appropriate behavior conducive to maintaining a peaceful atmosphere for all patrons. The child or children will be asked to leave the premises if proper behavior is not maintained. Children must know how to reach an adult in case of an emergency, and both child and adult should be aware of library hours.
2. If a child's behavior disturbs other library users, the child will be asked to leave the building after being warned once.
3. If an emergency exists, emergency personnel will be called first and then parents or guardians, in that order.

Children Left at Closing

If a child under the age of 12 is found unattended at closing time, library staff will attempt to contact an adult or family member. Staff are not permitted to remain after hours with an unattended child, nor give the child a ride home or offer the child a seat in their vehicle. If a caregiver cannot be reached, staff will notify the Brookfield Police Department to escort the child home or stay with the child until a caregiver has arrived. The Library Director will be informed whenever this action becomes necessary. The Director will contact the child's parent or guardian to explain the library policy and why this action was required.

Parental/Guardian Responsibilities

1. The Merrick Public Library subscribes to the principles of intellectual freedom as stated in the Freedom to Read, Freedom to View, the Library Bill of Rights. All patrons have the right to read, view, and listen to anything available in the library. Parents should be aware that all children, regardless of age, are allowed to browse all sections of the library. It is not the responsibility of library staff to monitor what children are borrowing. For more information, see section 9 of the Materials Selection Policy.
 - a. All children have the right to enjoy books, toys, and programs while in the library.
 - b. All children have the right to use the internet workstations, in accordance with our Internet and Wireless Use Policy.

c. All children who hold a library card and whose accounts are in good standing, may borrow materials in accordance with library borrowing rules.

2. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that children:

- Do not run in the library or climb shelving
- Do not fight with other children
- Do not leave toys scattered about and clean up after themselves
- Do not destroy library property
- Exhibit appropriate and respectful behavior during programs
- Are never left alone under age 12