BEDFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY
Children's Safety Policy

The Bedford Public Library welcomes children of all ages to use and enjoy the facilities, collections, and programming offered by the Library. The Library staff attempts to provide a safe, welcoming environment for children to use and enjoy the Library's resources. In order to create an environment of safety and maintain an atmosphere where children can select books and materials and attend library programs, the following policy has been established.

All Library visitors, including children, are subject to the Library's Rules of Behavior Policy. Parents, guardians, or caregivers are responsible for the behavior of minor children at all times, even if they are not in the Library with the child. Library staff does not serve *in loco parentis*, in place of the parent, for children at any time.

1. Children ages 0-7 must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other responsible caregiver (age 14 or older) at all times on the library grounds and in the building. Unless otherwise specified by staff, the caregiver must remain with the child in library programs.
2. Children ages 8-10 who are attending a program must be brought into the building by a caregiver, who must pick up the child in the building when the program ends. The caregiver may leave the building during the program. The child must have the caregiver's emergency contact information.
3. Children ages 8-10 who are not attending a program must have a caregiver in the building, but that caregiver may be in another part of the library.
4. Children ages 11 to 13 may utilize the library independently, but they shall not be responsible for supervising children younger than themselves and they must have their caregiver's emergency contact information.
5. Children ages 14 and up may utilize the library independently and may supervise younger children.

If a child under the age of 11 is left unattended, or if a child's behavior is inappropriate for the Library and the child does not respond to guidance from library staff, the parent or caregiver will be contacted by library staff. If the parent or legal guardian cannot be reached, local law enforcement officials may be called. Two staff members will wait with the child until law enforcement officers arrive.

Parents, or legal guardians must pick children up before the Library's posted closing time. If any unattended children are in the library fifteen minutes prior to closing time, the staff member will remind the child of the closing time and allow him or her to contact their parent, guardian or responsible caregiver using the library telephone.

If a child is alone at closing time, the staff will attempt to call the parent, legal guardian, or responsible caregiver. If no one can be reached on the first attempt, the staff may contact local law enforcement officials to assume responsibility for the child. Two staff members will remain with the child inside the Library entrance until law enforcement officials arrive. A note will be placed on the door notifying the parent, legal guardian, or responsible caregiver that the child is in the care of local law enforcement officials. Library staff will also file an incident report with the director. Under no circumstances shall a Library staff member transport or take a child away from the Library building.

Consequences for repeated violations of this policy:

1. **First occurrence:** For a first violation, a verbal warning by library staff will be given to the parent, guardian, or caregiver. Staff will also document the occurrence and advise the library director.
2. **Second occurrence:** For a second violation, a written warning by the library staff will be given to the parent, guardian, or caregiver. Any program registrations for the child will be reviewed. Staff will document the occurrence and advise the library director.
3. **Third occurrence:** For a third violation, a meeting with the director will be required. Upon review, the Director will have the discretion to issue appropriate restrictions based on the nature of the violation.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, July 1996
Revised July 9, 2019; Revised September 18, 2023; Revised October 3, 2025

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Written Warning for unattended child at the Bedford Public Library

Date: _____

Name of parent/guardian caregiver: _____

Brief summary of violation (include child's name and whether it was related to program attendance):

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Please provide parent/guardian/caregiver with the Children's Safety Policy and send a copy of this form to the Head of Children's Services and the Library Director

☐ Copy of form and policy given to parent/guardian/caregiver	☐ Copy of form given to Head of Children's Services	☐ Copy of form given to Library Director

BEDFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Verbal Warning for unattended child at the Bedford Public Library

Date: _____

Name of parent/guardian caregiver: _____

Brief summary of violation (include child's name and whether it was related to program attendance):

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Please send a copy of this form to the Head of Children's Services and the Library Director

☐ Copy of form given to Head of Children's Services	☐ Copy of form given to Library Director