



BEDFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Children's Safety Policy

The Bedford Public Library welcomes children to use its facilities and services. However, the responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children using the Library rests with the parent, legal guardian, or designated caregiver. The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern of the Library staff. The Library is a public building, open to all. In order to create an environment of safety and maintain an atmosphere where reading and study can be encouraged, the following policy has been established.

All Library visitors are subject to the Library's Rules of Behavior Policy. Parents 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. If a child's behavior is inappropriate for the Library, and the child does not respond to guidance from Library staff, the parent will be contacted to remove the child from the Library. If the parent cannot be reached and the child's behavior is deemed dangerous or unduly disruptive, local law enforcement may be called.

1. Children under age 11 must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible caregiver, age 14 or older, while at the Library. Children under the age of 8 must be in the same room of the Library as their parent or caregiver.
2. Children under the age of 8 attending a Library program must be brought into the building by a parent or responsible caregiver who must remain in the building until the conclusion of the program.
3. Children aged 8-10 may be left at a Library program, but must be picked up at the conclusion of the program. Children must know contact information in order to get in touch with a parent should the need arise.
4. Library staff members will attempt to contact the parent or legal guardian of the unattended child. 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.
5. Parents must pick children up at the Library's posted closing time. If a child is alone at closing time, the staff will attempt to call the parent, legal guardian, or designated 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 designated caregiver that the child is in the care of local law enforcement officials. Under no circumstances shall a Library staff member transport or take a child away from the Library building.