

# Hanson Public Library

## Safe Child Policy

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The Hanson Public Library strives to create a welcoming environment for children and offers many programs and services to encourage a love of books, reading, and learning.

The Hanson Public Library encourages children to use its facilities and services. At the same time, the safety of children left alone in a public building is a serious concern of the Library staff. **The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the Library rests with the parent, guardian, and/or caregiver and not the Library personnel.** Our Library staff is here to serve the information needs of our patrons. In order to help all of our patrons in the best way possible, our staff has many duties to perform. Library personnel cannot monitor the whereabouts of unsupervised children or be responsible for children who are demonstrating inappropriate behavior.

When children are unsupervised, they can become frightened or anxious. If they wander through the building, they may encounter hazards that could cause injury. Unsupervised children may become disruptive and will prompt corrective action from the staff. This will create a negative rather than a positive library experience. In order to provide for the general welfare of all Library patrons and the general safety of children, the Board of Trustees of the Hanson Public Library has adopted the following rules.

### General Guidelines

Responsibility for ensuring the safety, welfare, and appropriate behavior of children on Library premises rests with the parent/caregiver. Parents should make sure that their children are sufficiently mature before allowing them to visit the Library by themselves, and should realize that, even in their absence, they are legally responsible for their children's behavior. Library staff cannot monitor, supervise, or assume responsibility for children of any age left unattended at the Library.

Children are subject to the same rules of behavior as adult patrons. If a child's conduct interferes with another patrons' ability to use the Library in violation of Library policies, the child and parent/caregiver may be asked to leave the building. The Library assumes no responsibility for the whereabouts of an unattended child who has been asked to leave Library property.

### Ages 7 and under

Children ages 7 and under must have a parent/caregiver in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child. The assigned caregiver must be at least 14 years old and must carry emergency contact information. The parent/caregiver must stay with the child, unless the child is participating in storytime or any other Library program, in which case, the parent/caregiver is expected to remain in the Library building and to join the child immediately at the end of the program. If a child age 7 or under is found unattended in the Library, the staff will attempt to locate a parent/caregiver and inform them of the Library's policy. If a parent/caregiver cannot be located, staff will contact the Hanson Police Department to assist the child.

### Ages 8-12

Parents/caregivers should not view the Library as an alternative to day care or after-school programs. Staff cannot monitor everyone who enters, and all patrons are free to use any public area within the

Library. Parents should be advised that if the conduct of their child is inappropriate, the child may be instructed to leave the Library. Parents should further realize that, even in their absence, they are legally responsible for the behavior of their children.

### **Ages 13 and older**

Children ages 13 and older may use the Library on their own. However, parents are still responsible for the actions of their children. Children using inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the building. **If a child of this age group is not able to leave the Library without an adult, they should not be in the Library unattended.** This is of particular concern in inclement weather and after dark. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

### **Guidelines for Unaccompanied Children**

- Unaccompanied children should know how to contact a parent/caregiver in case of emergency.
- Unaccompanied children and their parents/caregivers should be familiar with the Library's hours of service. The Library may close due to emergencies such as inclement weather, power outages, etc. Parents/caregivers must be accessible to pick up their child at any time.
- Parents/caregivers are responsible for making arrangements to ensure unaccompanied children are picked up prior to closing time; unaccompanied children should know who is picking them up and when.
- The Library is not responsible for the care and supervision of unaccompanied children prior to opening or after closing, nor for children outside the building.
- If there is an unaccompanied child remaining in the Library at closing, Library staff will attempt to contact a parent/caregiver. If a parent/caregiver cannot be reached on the first attempt, the Hanson Police Department will be contacted to assist the child.
- Under no circumstances will Library staff transport an unaccompanied child away from the Library building.

### **Library Programs**

During Library programs, parents/caregivers who do not attend the program with the child must remain on the Library premises and immediately join the child at the end of the program. Exceptions for certain programs may be made with the permission of parents/caregivers and Library staff.

Adopted by the Board of Library Trustees  
June 22, 2021