

Hanson Public Library

Safe Child Policy

General Principles and Purpose

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 safety and welfare of children at the Library is of serious concern. This policy has been established for the protection and well-being of children using the Library. Parents/caregivers, not Library staff, are responsible for the behavior and safety of children visiting the Library. Parents/guardians 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.

Age for Independent Library Use

Children ages 7 and under must have a parent/caregiver who is at least 14 years old in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child at all times. If a child of this age is attending a Library program, parents/caregivers are required to stay in the program room or children's area until the end of the program.

Children ages 8-11 must have a parent/caregiver who is at least 14 years old in the Library building during their visit, and the child should know how to locate their parent/caregiver. If a child of this age is attending a Library program, parents/caregivers are required to stay in the Library until the end of the program.

Children ages 12 and older may use the Library independently and without supervision, provided they are mature enough to follow the Library's policies and guidelines for acceptable behavior. Library staff reserve the right to limit the number of hours an unattended child of this age may visit the Library per day.

Disruptive Children

All children are expected to follow the Library's policies and guidelines for acceptable behavior, and a child in violation of these policies and guidelines may be asked to leave the Library or may lose their Library access and/or privileges for a day or longer.

If a child's conduct interferes with another patron's ability to use the Library, a staff member will remind the child of the rules. If the behavior continues and the child is age 11 or under, a staff member will discuss the child's behavior with the parent/caregiver and explain that the child is being asked to leave the Library. If the behavior continues and the child is age 12 or older, the child will be asked to leave the Library. The Library assumes no responsibility for the whereabouts of an unattended child who has been asked to leave Library property.

Unaccompanied Children

If a child age 11 or under is found unattended in the Library, 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.

Unaccompanied children should know how to contact a parent/caregiver. In case of a medical emergency, when a parent/caregiver is not with the child, staff will contact emergency services and then a parent/guardian, in that order.

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 who await transportation or who are socializing.

If there is an unaccompanied child under the age of 12 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. At least two staff members will remain with the child until police arrive. Under no circumstances will Library staff transport an unaccompanied child away from the Library building.

Adopted by the Board of Library Trustees June 22, 2021
Revised September 22, 2026