

Wendell Free Library Child Safety Policy

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees on Oct 30, 2023

The Wendell Free Library welcomes children of all ages and strives to create a warm environment, an inviting place to develop a love of books and reading, and a place to find materials to serve their informational, educational, and recreational needs. Children are encouraged to visit the Library, and to take advantage of its resources.

However, the Library is a public building, and the well-being of young children left alone at the Library is a serious concern. The responsibility for children using the Library rests with the child's parent/guardian or a designated caregiver(aged 13+). The Library does not have the staffing to supervise and assure the safety of the unattended children, nor the authority, nor the legal responsibility to do so.

The safety and well-being of every child is very important and to ensure their protection, the Wendell Free Library has adopted the following policy.

1. Children younger than Fourth Grade (including the Summer before entering) must be accompanied and directly supervised by a parent/guardian or designated caregiver (13+) at all times in the Library
2. Parents/ designated caregivers (aged 13+) are responsible for the conduct of the children under their supervision while in the Library. If a child's conduct interferes with another patron's ability to use the Library in violation of posted policies, the child and their parent/designated caregiver will be asked to leave the building.
3. Parents/ designated caregivers must not leave the Library while their children younger than fourth grade are attending a Library sponsored program.
4. Children Fourth grade and older who use the Library unattended should be familiar with, and adhere to, Library Policies (Such as the Library Appropriate Use Policy), hours of service, and should know how to reach a parent or caregiver during their visit.
5. It is important for parents to understand that the playground regulations, governed by Mass General Law, states that parents and guardians are responsible for injury or death due to misuse of playground equipment.

The Library staff is not responsible for supervising children left alone at any time. Should the situation arise that a child under the age of Fourth Grade is unattended in the Library the following steps will be taken:

1. Attempts to contact or locate a parent/guardian will be made.
2. If no parent/guardian can be located or if the library is closing, a staff member will contact the police.

In any situation involving the safety of children, and specifically whenever the parent/caregiver or police are contacted, staff will complete an Incident Report.

Parents/guardians, not the library staff, are ultimately responsible for the actions and safety of children visiting the library.