

New Lebanon Library

Child Behavior and Safety Policy

(Adopted January 2005)

General

The New Lebanon Library welcomes children to use its facilities and services. The responsibility for the care, safety and behavior of children using the Library rests with the parent/guardian or caregiver. As with any patron, a child's behavior is unacceptable if it disrupts the normal use of the Library by other patrons or interferes with the staff or volunteers in the performance of their duties. Library staff and volunteers are not responsible for supervising children. The Library is not a substitute for daycare.

This policy is intended to inform the public and to guide Library staff and volunteers when they are confronted by children who are misbehaving or who are unattended. The Library recognizes that such circumstances may have widely varying facts and conditions, and this policy does not take the place of the exercise of sound judgment in addressing particular circumstances. In circumstances addressed by this policy, the Library staff or volunteer on duty will follow the guidance provided herein and will exercise sound judgment considering all relevant facts. Library staff and volunteers will not physically prevent a child from leaving the Library, assume responsibility for a child or accompany an unrelated child off Library premises.

Children through age 7 must have a parent or caregiver present in the Library. Children 8 - 12 may use the Library unattended for an amount of time appropriate to their age and maturity provided that the Library staff or volunteer on duty has been informed of how to contact the child's parent or caregiver.

Library staff and volunteers on duty who observe unacceptable behavior will inform the child and the parent or caregiver, if present, of this policy. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child will be asked to leave the Library. If the child is unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver, the staff or volunteer will follow the policy for unattended children.

Unattended Children

If a child under the age of 8 is in the Library without a parent or caregiver, Library staff or volunteer on duty will:

- A. attempt to comfort the child, if necessary;
- B. locate the parent or caregiver in the Library, explain the Child Safety Policy, and provide a copy of the policy to the parent;
- C. make reasonable efforts to contact the parent or caregiver who is not in the Library to come and pick up the child; and
- D. inform the Director or, in the Director's absence, a trustee who will then call the New York State Police, New Lebanon Division, to pick up the child if the parent or caregiver cannot be located after an appropriate time.

If an unattended child of any age is in the Library within 15 minutes of closing time Library staff or volunteer on duty will:

- A. contact the child's parent or guardian and/or ask the child to do so. If a parent or caregiver cannot be reached or does not arrive within 15 minutes following closing, Library staff or volunteer on duty will then call the Director or a trustee who will then call the New York State Police, New Lebanon Division, to pick up the child;
- B. remain with the child until the parent or caregiver or police arrive;
- C. leave a note on the Library door stating "Unattended child is in the custody of the New York State Police, 794-8445" once the child is in the care of the police. Names will not be stated on the note;
- D. not transport any child from the Library to another location.

If an unattended child of apparent school age is in the Library during school hours, the Library staff or volunteer on duty will call the appropriate New Lebanon School and will inform the child that the school will be notified of his or her presence at the Library during school hours.

Each incident in which a child has been asked to leave the Library or in which an unattended child has been present after closing will be reported in writing to the Director and the Board of Trustees.