



Meriden Public Library Child Safety Policy

The Library Board and staff are eager for children to use the Library and hope that children of all ages will find the Library to be a warm and welcoming place. However, it is not the Library's function or purpose to provide supervision or care for minor children while parents/caregivers are outside the Children's Library and/or the Main Library. Parents should be aware that the Library is a public building open to all individuals. In order to maintain a safe, orderly and appropriate environment for Library use, the following guidelines regarding the supervision of children are in effect:

1. Adults are only allowed in the Children's Library when they are accompanying a child or when they require access to the children's collection.
2. Children under the age of 12 must have a responsible family member or caregiver in the immediate vicinity and in visual contact with the child. If the responsible family member or caregiver of a child under age 12 wishes to go to another area of the Library, the child must accompany them. In any case, no child under the age of 12 should be left unsupervised by a family member or caregiver for a period of time that represents a substantial risk to the child's health or safety. Library staff has the discretion to determine if a caregiver has sufficient capacity to supervise the child.

The procedure for children left unattended in the Children's Library is:

- a. A phone call will be made to the parent/caregiver, and the policy will be reviewed with them.
 - b. If Library staff are not able to contact a parent/caregiver, Meriden police may be called.
 - c. If a child is repeatedly left unattended, library privileges may be suspended.
3. Minors age 12 and older may use the Library unaccompanied by an adult. Parents and guardians are responsible for the safety and conduct of their child/teen while on library premises, whether or not they accompany their child/teen to the library. Children/teens are expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct as adults. A child/teen who is not following the Library Code of Conduct may be asked to leave the premises. The library is not responsible for children/teens after hours. Parents and guardians should be aware of the library's hours of operation, and keep in mind that hours may change unexpectedly due to emergencies or inclement weather.
 4. Minors under the age of 18, like all library users, are required to respect Library property, and act in a manner appropriate to the use and function of the Library (see Library Code of Conduct). Minors who are not using the Library appropriately, or who require excessive staff attention or supervision, may be asked to leave the Library. The parents, guardians or caregivers of these minors may be notified, and if necessary, asked to stay with their minor children while visiting the Library.

5. Parents, guardians or caregivers should be aware of Library opening and closing times and make suitable arrangements to meet and transport their children.
 - If an unattended child is left at the Library at closing time, or as the result of an emergency closing, staff will assist the child in calling home to arrange transportation.
 - Staff members will remain with the child for 15 minutes after library closing.
 - Staff will contact Meriden Police after 15 minutes.
 - ***Under no circumstances will a Library staff member take a child out of the building or transport a child to another location.***

The Meriden Library encourages children to use the library. However, the library does not have the right to act in loco parentis. Therefore, if you are concerned that your children might bring home a book or audiovisual item or access internet content which does not meet your personal standards, we urge you to accompany them when they use the library's collection. We cannot forbid your child to read, hear, or view anything. That is the responsibility of the parent, guardian, or caregiver. Our staff is available to help you and your child find materials which meet your specific needs.