

## Safety for Children

The Goodnow Library is committed to providing excellent programs and services for children of all ages.

The Goodnow Library has provided the following policies for parents and caregivers regarding children while visiting the Library in order to promote a safe and welcoming environment for children of all ages.

- The Library is open to a wide cross-section of the public, similar to a shopping mall or a supermarket. Library staff is concerned about your child's safety but cannot substitute for parents or teachers, and are not babysitters. **The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the Library rests with the parents, legal guardians, or other responsible caregivers** (hereinafter "parent or responsible caregiver"). *Library staff is not responsible for the care and safety of unsupervised or unattended children in the library.* The Library does not provide transportation, babysitting, or day care services.
- All children in the Library must follow the Acceptable Behavior policy (#4-4) and are expected to use the Library appropriately. Children who do not follow these rules are subject to the same consequences as other library users, including being required to leave the Library or losing library privileges.
- The children's area of the Library is reserved for children, their parents or responsible caregivers, and adults interested in children's literature, such as teachers and college students taking children's literature classes. Out of concern for the safety of young patrons, adults who are unaccompanied by a child or children in the children's area of the Library may be questioned by staff, and may be asked to move to another area of the Library.
- Chrome Books, iPads, and other technology in the Children's Room are for the use of children and caregivers who are accompanying children. All other users are required to use computers in the adult areas.
- In accordance with Massachusetts General Law 119, Section 39 children under the age of 10 may not be left unattended in the Library.

### Supervision and Unattended Children

- **0-9 Years of Age**
  - Children under the age of 10 must be supervised by a responsible caregiver (someone 14 years or older) at all times, including in the Children's Room. Children who are left unsupervised while a parent/caregiver is in another area of the building will be considered unattended.

- If the child is attending a program that the library staff have deemed for children only (such as children's book group), a parent or caregiver is expected to remain in the Library for the duration of the program. They should also return promptly to the Children's Room at the conclusion of the program so they are visible to the child. Parents or caregivers are required to attend library programs with their children unless otherwise specified by library staff.
- If a child age nine or younger is found to be unaccompanied in the Library, staff will try to locate the parent or responsible caregiver to remedy the situation. If a parent or responsible caregiver is unavailable, the Police, or other appropriate government agency may be called.
- **10-12 Years of Age**
  - Children ages 10 to 12 are welcome to use the Library unattended for up to two hours to select materials, attend programs, and complete homework assignments. It is also important for parents to go over the Library Behavior Policy and be accessible in case a child needs to leave early or in the case of an emergency.
  - If a child age 10 to 12 is left unattended for a period extending two hours, Library staff will try to contact the parent or responsible caregiver to remedy the situation. If a parent or responsible caregiver is unavailable, the Police, or other appropriate government agency may be called.
- **13 Years of Age & Older**
  - Children ages 13 and older are old enough to use the Library in a responsible manner. Children must have a way to contact a parent or caregiver at all times whenever they are left unattended in the Library. Please be aware that if a child's behavior is disruptive they may be asked to leave and parents may be contacted. If necessary, a staff member will make a written report concerning the incident.
- **Closing/Pick-Up**
  - It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to be aware of Library hours of operation, particularly opening and closing times, when making transportation arrangements. The Library does not observe the same schedule every day. If the Library is preparing to close and a child does not have a ride, a staff member will make every attempt to contact a parent or caregiver. If necessary, the Library may, immediately and without recourse, contact the Sudbury Police Department to arrange pickup or transportation.

- Situations may arise when, due to unusual or emergency circumstances, it may be necessary for the Library to close without prior notice. In this event or in case of other emergencies, unaccompanied children age 18 years or younger who cannot transport themselves must be able to reach a parent or responsible caregiver for immediate pick-up. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to make necessary arrangements to pick up the child.
- At least two staff members will remain after hours with an unattended child until the parent, guardian, designated caregiver or police arrive.
  - Staff will not transport a child nor will a child be allowed to sit in a staff person's vehicle.
  - Staff members staying with the child will be compensated for time spent waiting. Staff members should fill out an incident report form and leave it for the director when the police are called.
  - The Sudbury Police plan to go to the child's home first and leave a message indicating that the officer will be picking the child up at the library and will bring him or her to the police station.