

Youth in the Library

Service to youth is a major focus of the library's mission. Youth are welcome to use the library at any time it is open. However, the library does not have a specific responsibility to care for, or watch out for youth left unattended in its facilities. Children under 10 must be accompanied by someone 14 or older at all times. Parents or caregivers are responsible for the behavior of their children. Teachers are responsible for the conduct of their students when they are in the library for a class visit or tour.

The library recognizes that teens deserve a space that is safe, relaxing, and responsive to their needs and interests. As such, the library maintains the Teen Zone for use by teens aged 12-18. Patrons outside of this age range may be permitted at the discretion of Teen Zone staff.

Approved September 18, 2018

Procedures:

If unattended children are left at the library, a parent or legal guardian will be notified to pick them up. If a parent cannot be reached, the police will be called to escort them to the police station to be picked up by a parent or guardian.

Under no circumstances will a library employee or volunteer transport a youth from library premise

As a parent or guardian, you are responsible for what your child reads and for materials checked out on your child's library card. Parents or guardians grant access to library materials at the time of library card application. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to monitor a child's selection of materials. Separate collections are available for children and teens, but it is not the responsibility of the library, its Board of Trustees, staff, or volunteers to determine which collection they should use or what item in the collections is suitable for an individual child. Being a library card holder is a good opportunity for your child to learn about responsibility; how to choose what to read, making sure library materials are returned on time, and paying fines when materials are overdue.

Our book selectors seek materials that will provide a broad range of viewpoints and subject matter. Consequently, while our collection has thousands of items families want, like and need, it may also have materials that some parents might find offensive to them or inappropriate for their children.

Libraries must meet the diverse needs of everyone in the community. They cannot overrule the rights and responsibilities of individuals by deciding who does or doesn't have access to library materials.

Decisions about what materials are suitable for particular children should be made by the people who know them best -- their parents or guardians.

Children mature at different rates. They have different backgrounds and interests, and they have different reading levels and abilities. For instance, one parent may feel a particular library book is inappropriate for his daughter, while the same book may be a favorite of her classmate's family. These factors make it impossible for librarians to set any criteria for restricting based on age alone. To do so would keep others who want and need materials from having access to them.

Like adults, youth have the right to seek and receive the information that they choose. It is the right and responsibility of parents to guide their own family's library use while allowing other parents to do the same.

Parents should discuss rules regarding library use with their children. If you are concerned they will not respect your wishes, it is your responsibility to visit the library with them.

Librarians are not authorized to act as parents, but they are happy to provide suggestions and guidance to parents and youth at any time.