



## **CHILDREN SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The Washington Township Public Library welcomes library use by children. The happiness and safety of young children left alone in the Library is a serious concern. Staff members are available to assist children with library materials and services. The Library desires to provide a safe and appropriate environment for visitors of all ages. The Library however is a public building with staff trained to provide public library services. The Library is not equipped and it is not the Library's role to provide long or short-term child care. The Library is not responsible for children who are left unattended on Library premises.

It is not the library's intention to seek out unattended children but rather to have a reasoned response prepared if situations arise.

### **GENERAL BEHAVIOR**

- Children, like all of our patrons are expected to behave appropriately while in the library. Please refer to our Code of Conduct for these guidelines. Children of any age who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves may not be left alone in the library or on library grounds at any time and must have adequate supervision from an Appropriate Caregiver.
- Children who behave in a manner that is disruptive or interferes with the operation or use of the library will be asked to leave the library. (Until they can behave in a manner that is safe and no longer disruptive)
- If an unattended child aged 12 and older is behaving in a manner that is disruptive or interferes with the operation or use of the library, that child's Appropriate Caregiver will be notified, and they will be asked to remove their child from the library immediately. If they cannot be located or refuse to do so, the Washington Township Police will be called.

### **GUIDELINES:**

- Parents and caregivers, not the Library and Library Staff members, are responsible for the safety, behavior, and supervision of children at all times. At no time will the Library or Library staff members stand *in loco parentis* or in place of a parent or caregiver.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

- Appropriate Caregiver: Refers to a parent, guardian or caregiver aged 15 or over.

### **FOLLOWING ARE THE GUIDELINES WHICH MUST BE MET BY AN APPROPRIATE CAREGIVER ACCOMPANYING OR LEAVING A CHILD IN THE LIBRARY:**

- Children under the age of 6 years must be in direct supervision (within sight or conversation distance) by an Appropriate Caregiver at all times.
- Children ages 6-11 may be under the indirect supervision of an Appropriate Caregiver, but this individual must be present in the library at all times, and within a reasonable distance to monitor the child's behavior and safety.
- Children ages 12 and older may be in the library unsupervised provided they follow the Library Code of Conduct (available on library website and posted throughout the library)
- An Appropriate Caregiver is required to be at the library no later than 15 minutes before closing to pick up a child 12 and older. If no Appropriate Caregiver can be contacted after closure, the Washington Township Police Department will be called.
- The Library is not responsible for a minor's selection of library material. The Library believes it is the right and responsibility of an Appropriate Caregiver to determine what is appropriate for their own child.

### **CHILDREN AND PROGRAMMING**

- Children under the ages of 6 must have direct supervision of an Appropriate Caregiver while attending a program.
- An Appropriate Caregiver must remain in the vicinity of where the program is located or in the Children's Room, while a child age 6-11 is attending a program.
- Children of all ages are expected to behave in a safe and respectful manner while attending a library program.

### **CHILDREN AND COMPUTER USE**

- Parents and guardians of minor children, not the Washington Township Public Library, are responsible for their children's use of the Internet through Library connection. While the Library staff may be available to help parents identify appropriate resources for their children, the Library does not restrict access to any materials.