



Safety of Children Policy

The Edgartown Public Library welcomes children of all ages to use and enjoy the facilities, collections and programs offered by the library. We endeavor to make the library a warm, inviting, and safe place for children.

The library staff is responsible for performing library service duties and cannot be responsible for the care or safety of unattended children. Parents or guardians are responsible for the safety and behavior of their children at all times while in the library. In order to create an environment of safety and maintain an atmosphere where children can enjoy all that the library offers, the following policies have been established:

- Parents or guardians are responsible for the behavior of their children at all times while in the library. Rules regarding disruptive behavior in the Library's General Conduct Policy apply to children as well. If a child violates the General Conduct Policy, he/she may be asked to leave the library.
- Children eight and older may use the library unattended, but are subject to the rules and regulations in effect regarding behavior and conduct, including the library's General Conduct Policy.
 - Toddlers or very young children who (at the discretion of staff) are left unsupervised while a parent is in another area of the building will be considered unattended.
 - Children under eight who are dropped off at the library without a parent, guardian, or sibling over the age of 14 will be considered unattended.
- Parents should refer to the library's Technology Use Policy for information on Children's Use of the Internet.
- Staff may contact the Edgartown Police Department if a parent or guardian of an unattended child cannot be located.
- Children must be picked up 10 minutes before the library closes. Parents and guardians are expected to know the opening and closing times of the library, bearing in mind that the time can and does change in case of emergencies. Once the library is closed, children cannot wait inside the building and staff are unavailable to stay with children until they are picked up. Staff will not transport children home or to any other destination under any circumstances.
- Staff may use its discretion in asking children to leave the library who display obvious signs of illness, even if accompanied by an adult.

- Out of concern for the safety of young patrons, patrons 14 years of age and older who are not accompanied by children may not loiter in the Children's Room.

Library Staff are mandated by law (MGL Ch. 119, Sec. 51A) to report suspected child abuse.

Safety of Children Procedures:

If the General Conduct Policy is violated, the staff's discretion will be used regarding discipline for inappropriate behavior. Discipline may consist of verbal warnings, being asked to leave the building for the remainder of the day, and/or having library privileges temporarily suspended.

The Edgartown Library has a zero tolerance policy for verbal or physical aggression, stealing or willful destruction of library or personal property, and serious misconduct that disturbs staff and/or patrons.

In case of medical emergency when a parent/guardian is not with a child, staff will contact 911, and then the parent/guardian, in that order.

If a child is considered unattended (under age 8), staff will do the following:

1. Attempt to contact parent/guardian.
2. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached or cannot arrange to immediately pick up the child; staff may place the child in the care of the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Adopted March 14, 2016 by the Edgartown Library Board of Trustees.

Revised May 9, 2016; April 13, 2017; and January 9, 2020 by the Edgartown Library Board of Trustees.

COVID-19 Amendment adopted October 8, 2020, and rescinded August 12, 2021 by the Edgartown Library Board of Trustees.

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