

Kennebunk Free Library Child Safety Policy

Unattended Children

The Kennebunk Free Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for customers of all ages. Sharing this environment with other people requires that everyone follow the Patron Conduct Policy posted in multiple locations around the Library and on the Library website.

The Staff and Trustees of the Kennebunk Free Library welcome and encourage children to use its facilities and services. Children in the Library should always be accompanied by a caregiver.

The safety of children left alone in a Library building is a serious concern of the Library staff. **The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the Library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with the Library personnel.** Library employees are not responsible for children who are unattended or who do not comply with the Patron Code of Conduct.

The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of young Library users:

Children Age 8 and younger must have a caregiver (minimum age 14) in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child. An exception would be children attending a Library program without a caregiver in the room. However, the caregiver is expected to remain in the Library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

If a child in this age group is found unattended, Library staff will attempt to locate the caregiver in the Library and inform him/her of the policy. If the caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended again, the police may be called for assistance.

Children 9 and older may use the Library on their own. However, parents are still responsible for the actions and the well-being of their child(ren). **If a child in this age group is not permitted by a parent/caregiver to leave the Library without an adult, he/she should not be in the Library alone.** This is a particular concern in inclement weather and after dark. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

Children 14 and older are treated as adult users. However, they are still legally the responsibility of their parents/guardians and should have an emergency contact available.

Closing Time: Children younger than 14 who do not have transportation home at closing time will be asked for telephone numbers of people who can pick them up at the Library. A patron courtesy telephone is available on the lower level next to the elevator for local calls. If transportation is not available within 15 minutes of closing, the police will be called for assistance.

Unaccompanied Adults

For the safety of our young patrons, the Children's Room is reserved for use by children, their parents or caregivers, and adults using the children's collection. Adults unaccompanied by a child may enter the Children's Room to obtain books or other materials but must leave once their selection is made. Staff may, at their discretion, ask unaccompanied adults to move to other areas of the library. The same restrictions will apply to any area of the library in which a youth program is in progress.