

Children's Safety Policy

Introduction

We welcome children in the Walter E. Olson Memorial Library ("OML" or "the Library"). We encourage parents and caregivers to bring children to the library and hope that children who use the Library will enjoy their visits. In order to provide a safe environment for the children and families who use the Library, the OML Board of Trustees has adopted the following policy. This policy was developed in reference to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#), Wisconsin State Statutes [48](#) and [948](#), and in consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Vilas County Department of Social Services.

Policy

OML staff members and volunteers are available to assist children with Library materials or services. However, the Library is not equipped, nor is it the Library's role, to provide childcare of any kind or duration. Programming offered for children at the library is not intended to take the place of care by a parent or other caregiver*.

The responsibility and for the safety, well-being, and behavior of children is the responsibility of parents or caregivers, whether they are present at the Library with their children or not. Please be mindful of the following:

- noise levels
- running
- cleaning up items that have been used or moved
- bathroom needs
- interactions with other patrons

Children under the age of 8 must be supervised by a responsible parent/caregiver at all times and may not be left unattended in any part of the Library. Parents/caregivers are expected to accompany, assist, and remain within a distance where they can visually or by other means supervise children in their care while they are using the Library. Children who are not in this type of close proximity to a caregiver are considered "unattended".

Children 8-10 may be left unattended at the Library, but a parent/caregiver must remain on the Library premises.

Children 11 and up may visit the Library on their own, provided they have the ability to get to and from the Library safely. If you choose to allow a child aged 11+ to visit the library alone, please ensure that they have a way of contacting you or another caregiver should the need arise.

* Based on the minimum age requirement for attending Red Cross Babysitter Training, caregivers must be at least 11 years of age.

Library staff will take appropriate action if any of the following at-risk situations are observed:

- Children under the age of eight (8) left unattended.
- Children of any age who become disruptive or appear to be frightened when left alone or in the care of other children at a library.
- Children of any age who appear to be subjected to physical or emotional abuse while using library facilities.
- Children of any age who appear to be subjected to uninvited interactions.
- Children of any age who have no means of getting home when the Library is closing.

Such action may include an attempt to contact the parent or guardian of an unattended child, or notification of a law enforcement or child protective services agency, as appropriate. Library staff and/or volunteers will not provide transportation for any patron, but may allow use of the Library telephone to arrange for transportation.

Violation of this Policy

In addition to staff interventions intended to ensure the safety of children in the Library, individuals (parents/caregivers and children 11 and up) in violation of this policy may be asked to leave the Library or have their Library privileges suspended. The penalties for violating the Children's Safety Policy will fall upon the responsible parent/guardian who has failed to observe the policy, not the child(ren) under their care. The Library staff will fill out a written incident report documenting violations of this policy. A copy of this report will be submitted to the Library Director immediately following an incident for determination of additional actions.