

## **Child Safety & Children's Room Policies**

The Scituate Town Library strives to provide a safe, welcoming, and inviting environment for children of all ages. Recognizing that, the library is a public building and the Scituate Town Library has established the following Child Safety & Children's Room Policies for the well-being of all patrons.

### ***Unattended Children***

#### **Under 8**

- Children under 8 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian/caregiver over the age of 14 at all times in the library, including in the Children's Room (with the exception of library programs).
- All Children under the age of 8 who are left unsupervised while a parent/guardian/caregiver is in another area of the building will be considered unattended.
- Library staff will not be responsible for supervising unattended children. An unattended child found frightened or crying in the building will be reassured by the staff and brought to the children's librarian or librarian-on-duty. Staff will identify and contact the parent/guardian/caregiver to the extent feasible. If the parent/guardian/caregiver cannot be contacted within a reasonable amount of time, staff will contact the Scituate Police Department.
- Children under 8 attending a program in the Community Room or the Children's Program room with library staff may attend without an adult unless otherwise specified by the Children's Room staff running the program. Parents must stay in the Children's Room.

#### **Age 8 and 9**

- Children aged 8 and over may be unattended in the building (*as long as a parent/guardian/caregiver remains in the library*) for the period of time needed to select materials, complete homework assignments, or attend a program.
- Parents/caregivers/guardians must remain in the building while the child selects materials, completes homework assignments, or attends a program.

#### **Age 10 and Over**

- Children aged 10 and over may use the library without a supervising adult in the building. However, the child must know how to reach the responsible adult should this need arise, e.g. sudden building closure due to inclement weather or power outage. Children should not be left for more than a two hour period of time.

- Children and parents/guardians/caregivers should be aware of the closing times of the library. Children must be picked up 10 minutes before the library closes. Once the library is closed, children cannot wait inside the building and staff is unavailable to stay with children until they are picked up. Staff may contact the Scituate Police Department if a parent/guardian/caregiver of an unattended child cannot be located within 10 minutes after closing. The Library Director will contact the child's parent or guardian the next possible business day to explain the library policy and explain why the action was required.
- In case of medical emergency when parents are not with the child, staff will call 911 and then parents/guardian/caregiver, in that order.
- All incidents of children left unattended will be recorded by a staff member on the Scituate Town Library Incident Report Form.

### ***Children's Room Patron Behavior***

To preserve the safety and enjoyment of all our patrons, please use indoor voices and walking feet in the Children's Room. The Scituate Town Library Children's Room is frequently a busy place and running and yelling can be dangerous and/or disruptive.

Shoes must be worn while in the library to ensure the safety of all patrons. Toddlers and babies who are walking must wear shoes. Leather slip-on toddler shoes are considered shoes.

Food and beverages must not be consumed in the Children's Room to ensure the safety of all patrons and for the protection of library furnishings. This includes, but is not limited to, sippy cups, juice boxes, goldfish crackers, etc. Please take all snacks and drinks to the foyer. Infant bottles and breastfeeding ARE permitted.

*This policy is effective upon the approval of the Library Board of Trustees. Amendments and/or revisions to this policy shall be formulated and recommended to the Board of Trustees as needed. The policy may be amended and/or revised at a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees.*