



## Child Safety Policy

*The Waterloo Grant Township Public Library is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment to library users of all ages. For the protection of our younger users, the following policy regarding child safety has been adopted.*

### **Unattended Children Policy:**

The library cannot be responsible for unattended children:

- A responsible parent or caregiver must accompany children under the age of 8.
- If a child under the age of 8 is found unattended, the library staff will attempt to contact the child's parent or caregiver and inform them of the policy. If the child's parent or caregiver cannot be located, the child will be placed in the care of local law enforcement.
- School age children age 8 and over may use the library unattended as long as their conduct is acceptable in a library setting. Examples of unacceptable behavior in the library include, but are not limited to: damaging library property, unauthorized physically active games (i.e. tag), bothering other library patrons or staff members, or engaging in inappropriate activity as determined by the library staff.
- Library staff members retain the right to ask patrons engaging in unacceptable behavior to leave.
- Parents are expected to set time limits for their children's library visits. The procedures for addressing unattended children under the age of 8 may be applied to older children as needed.

Librarians may take action on behalf of children in such cases as:

- A child who is ill, frightened, or limited in abilities.
  - A child who is vulnerable due to weather conditions, meal arrangements, or inability to contact his/her parent or caregiver over a long period of time.
  - A child whose disruptive behavior has not subsided despite verbal warnings from the library staff.
  - Any child who has not been picked up within 15 minutes of closing time. At the end of 15 minutes, if the child/teen is not picked up, staff will call law enforcement to come and wait with or transport the child/teen.
- The library staff is not responsible for the care or supervision of minors on library property.
  - Under no circumstance will a library staff member provide transportation to an unattended child.

### **Child Protection Guidelines for Staff**

Employees and volunteers who work with children and youth should observe the "two-person rule" or the "open-door policy." The two-person rule requires that employees shall make every reasonable effort to avoid situations where an employee or volunteer worker is alone with children or youth in a closed room with no outside visual contact. The open-door policy requires any door be open at all times when

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on May 3, 2022

Future Revision Date: May 2027

children are present. Under no circumstances will a staff member give a child a ride home, take a child outside the building, or remain in the building alone with an unattended child.

***Discipline:***

It is not the Waterloo Grant Township Public Library Policy for librarians or staff to be responsible for the discipline, supervision, or training of children; however, when the safety of the child or the preservation of library materials is necessary the following corrective guidelines apply.

- 1) No library employee may use physical force to correct a child.
- 2) A verbal reminder of correct library behavior is suggested.
- 3) If after a verbal warning the child 's behavior doesn't cease then the parent/guardian should be notified.
- 4) If the child is not accompanied by their parent, the child may be asked to leave the premises. If this isn't sufficient then the parent/ guardian is to be notified.

***General Rule of Behavior:***

No running or disruptive play in the library as it is hazardous to themselves and others. No placing of feet on tables or furniture. No climbing in or around the bookshelves. The use of the library as a babysitting service by parents is discouraged. Under no conditions shall a librarian or staff drive a child home or stay with a child after the library has closed. Parents, guardians, and/or the responsible caregiver – not the library – are responsible for children in their care. Disruptive children, attended or unattended, may be asked to leave.

**Reporting Procedures**

Indiana law requires a person to immediately report suspected child abuse to the authorities and in an organization such as the Waterloo Grant Township Public Library, to the appropriated individual in charge. A person who fails to do so can be prosecuted for a Class B misdemeanor.

In the event of suspected, reported, or discovered child abuse, the employee or volunteer shall immediately notify the director, or, in the absence of the director, either the assistant director or the youth services director. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or neglect, an employee or volunteer may also immediately make a report to the local child protection service or law enforcement agency, or they may leave that up to the library authority previously mentioned.

Reports shall be documented in writing with the date of the report, the time of the report, the telephone number to which the report was made, the name of the recipient of the report, and a brief synopsis of the report.