

Mountain Top Library

Safe Child Policy

Statement of Philosophy

Mountain Top Library is a public space, and everyone is welcome to visit. As such, we invite children of all ages & their caregivers to utilize the space for enrichment & recreation.

The staff at Mountain Top Library performs a variety of duties, designed to best serve our community & visiting patrons. While safety is paramount, staff cannot constantly monitor the whereabouts of every patron in the library, nor can they assume parental responsibilities for the children who visit.

Children are among our most vulnerable visitors, and if left unattended in a public space, may wander off with a stranger or get lost, they may become injured or sick, or they may be left helpless if an emergency takes place inside the building.

In order to best ensure the safety of every child who visits, Mountain Top Library has adopted the following Safe Child Policy, which is designed to accommodate the varied ages of children, as well as the role of their responsible parties. Responsible parties are divided into two categories: Parents/Guardians and Caretakers. Parents/Guardians can be defined as individuals who are legally responsible for the child independent of their library visit, such as parent, custodial parent, or legal guardian. Whereas Caretakers (aged 16+) can be defined as individuals who are temporarily responsible for the child, during their time visiting the library. Caretakers are often older siblings, relatives, or babysitters.

Statement of Policy

Children Ages 5 & Under: Under no circumstance is a child under the age of five permitted in the library without a responsible party. Children under the age of 5, must be directly supervised at all times, and remain within close proximity with their attendant. While Parents / Guardians may accompany all of their children, irrespective of age, Caretakers are limited to three children for whom they may be responsible.

Library Programs / Events: Unless otherwise noted, responsible parties must remain in the Library during programs or events.

Children Ages 6-10: Under no circumstance are children ages 6-10 permitted in the library without a responsible party. While children within this age range may require less direct supervision, and may engage in independent play, or activities, the responsible party must

remain within the vicinity. While Parents / Guardians may accompany all of their children, irrespective of age, Caretakers are limited to three children for whom they may be responsible.

Library Programs / Events: Unless otherwise noted, responsible parties must remain in the Library during programs or events.

Children Ages 11+: Children within this age range are permitted to visit the library without a responsible party, however, any disruptive child will be asked to behave, and given a verbal warning. If the behaviors continue, the library staff will attempt to notify the child's parents to come pick up the child. If the parents are unable to be reached, the library staff will notify the Police Department to come pick up the child.

Parents/caretakers are responsible for the child's behavior at all times while in the building.

Child Left Unattended

A staff member will comfort unattended children who appear to be lost or frightened, and will try to identify and locate the parents/ caretaker. If the responsible parties are unable to be located in the library building, a staff member will monitor the child until the parent /caretaker returns to the library. When located, the SAFE CHILD POLICY will be explained, and a copy given to the parent /caretaker. Additionally, staff will record the parent's/caretaker's name, address; telephone number and the child's name, and will refer any additional incidents to the police.

Children Unattended After Closing Time

Library staff must exercise appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of unattended children 10 years of age and younger when the library is closing,

1. If no ride has arrived within 15 minutes after closing time the staff will attempt to call a guardian or caregiver and staff will monitor children left unattended. Parents/caretakers are responsible for being aware of the times the Library opens and closes. If no contact is made the local police will be notified.
2. Staff will record the parent's/caretaker's name, address, telephone number and the child's name.
3. Once found, the parent / caretaker will be given a copy of the SAFE CHILD POLICY.
4. Staff will refer any additional incidents to the police.

LIBRARY STAFF MEMBERS NEVER GIVE RIDES OR LEAVES UNATTENDED CHILDREN IN THE BUILDING AFTER CLOSING TIME

*Revised and Board Approved 5/25/23

