



## **Child Safety Policy**

### **A. Introduction/Overview:**

The Lenox Library strives to provide a safe, educational, and enjoyable place for children ages 0-18 years. Libraries are public buildings available for use by the community. Therefore, it is the intention of this policy to enlist the cooperation of parents and other adults responsible for children to ensure that the Lenox Library provides a safe and pleasant experience for all who use it.

### **B. General Policy Considerations:**

B1. Unaccompanied Adults in the Youth Department areas: For the safety of children in the Library, adults unaccompanied by children are asked to remain in the adult sections of the Library unless they actively are using the materials or services in the Youth Department. Adults who wish to use children's materials in the Library should notify the staff on duty of that need, and take those selections to an adult area of the Library.

B2. All children age 9 and under must be accompanied and continually supervised by a parent or caregiver while in the Library.

B3. Parents or caregivers, not Library staff, are responsible for the actions and safety of their children while visiting the Library.

B4. Children age 9 and under are not allowed to ride in the elevator by themselves.

B5. Children 10 and older may come to the Library by themselves, as long as they know how to be in touch with a parent or caregiver on the phone. Children will be expected to display appropriate behavior, conducive to maintaining a safe Library for all patrons.

B6. Bicycles, skateboards, rollerblades, roller skates, scooters, or hoverboards are not allowed in the Library.

B7. The parent or caregiver is liable for all damage done by their children to the library facility, equipment, or material.

B8. Children exhibiting disruptive behavior may be asked to leave. They may come back another day to try again. "Disruptive behavior" is any behavior that either consciously or unconsciously violates or restricts the rights of others to use the Library; prevents Library employees from doing their jobs; or jeopardizes the safety of other Library users, staff, or themselves.

### **C. Procedures for Disruptive Behavior:**

C1. A child who engages in disruptive behavior, whether attended or not, will be told his/her/their actions are inappropriate at the Library and will be asked to stop by a staff member.

C2. If the disruptive behavior continues, a staff member will inform the parent or caregiver that their child is disturbing others or behaving inappropriately.

C3. If disruptive behavior persists, the child, or adult and child, may be asked to leave after two warnings have been given. The child may not return for the duration of that day. If a child is unaccompanied, Library staff will try to reach the child's parent or caregiver. The parent or caregiver will be informed of the disruptive behavior, the Library's policy, and will be asked to pick up the child. If the parent or caregiver cannot or does not come for the child within the agreed upon time, or 15 minutes before closing, then the procedures for "Child Left Unattended" should be followed.

C4. The incident will be recorded by a Library staff member on the standard Incident Report form, which will be given to the Library Director.

### **D. Child Left Unattended:**

D1. When a child of any age is unattended or under-attended/ignored and

- the behavior of the child is disruptive or inappropriate or,
- the child appears to be a danger to himself or others or,
- the child appears to be threatened by others or,

- the child appears to threaten, bully, or intimidate others or,
- the child appears to be ill or upset,

Library staff will attempt to contact the parent or caregiver of the child immediately. Staff members will stay with the child until someone arrives to pick him or her up. If a parent or caregiver has not arrived within one (1) hour, staff will contact the Lenox Police Department.

D2. All incidents of a child being left unattended will be recorded by a staff member on the standard Incident Report form, which will be given to the Library Director.

#### **E. Unattended Child After Library Hours:**

If a child is alone at closing time and appears to be vulnerable, the following steps will be taken. ("Vulnerable" is defined as an unattended child or adolescent whose safety or well-being would be endangered if she/he were sent out of the building.)

E1. Two staff members will stay with the child until a parent or caregiver can be contacted on the phone. If staff cannot reach a parent or caregiver on the first attempt, the person in charge will call the Lenox Police Department to assume responsibility for the child. A staff member will post a note on the door advising the parent/caregiver of the circumstances and stating where the child can be located. Staff members will not give rides home to a child left at the Library.

E2. All incidents of a child being left vulnerable will be recorded by a staff member on the standard Incident Report form, which will be given to the Library Director.

#### **F. Child Abuse by an Adult:**

F1. If an incident of child abuse is observed or suspected of occurring, staff should intervene to try to distract the adult if it can be done safely. Staff should never place themselves physically between the child and adult.

F2. Staff should use language that refers to Library policy and does not in any way accuse the adult.

F3. If the adult does not cease, and the behavior is abusive, the Lenox Police will be called.

F4. The incident will be recorded by a staff member on the standard Incident Report form and reported to the Library Director.

### **G. Computer Use by Children:**

G1. The Lenox Library offers unfiltered computer and Internet access. The Library does not monitor and has no control over the information accessed through the Internet and is not responsible for its content. As with other library materials, parents and legal guardians, not the Library staff, are responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their children. Parents who are concerned about their children's use of the Internet are expected to provide guidance to their own children.

G2. Public computers in the Youth Department are for use by children and their accompanying adults only.

### **H. Access to Library Materials by Children:**

The Lenox Library subscribes to the principles of intellectual freedom as stated in "Freedom to Read," "Freedom to View," and the "Library Bill of Rights" and their interpretations issued by the American Library Association. Included in these statements is the commitment to honor the rights of an individual to use the Library regardless of age, race, religion, national origin, or social or political views. Children and adults are equally free to use the entire Library and to borrow all materials in the circulating collections. Anyone, of any age, may use any materials in the Library, and is not to have that privilege limited by any staff member. Limitations to be placed upon the reading and viewing materials of young people are left to the discretion of the parents and caregivers. If you need help choosing appropriate reading materials for your child, please contact our Youth Librarian.