

SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN POLICY

The Board of Trustees and the Staff of the Cass District Library are concerned about the safety and well-being of all patrons. We welcome children and we offer many programs especially for children to encourage a lifelong appreciation of books and libraries.

Caregivers (Parents, guardians or assigned caregivers at least 16 years old) are responsible for the welfare and the behavior of children using CDL facilities. Although staff will always respond with care and concern, the Library is not responsible for safety and comfort of unattended children.

Children left unattended are at risk. They could become frightened or ill, or be tempted to leave the building. Unattended children can also be disruptive to other library patrons. It is for the safety and well-being of each patron that the Cass District Library has adopted this Child Safety Policy.

Children twelve (12) years and under must be accompanied and adequately supervised by an adult at all times while visiting any Cass District Library location. Children under the age of 8 must be in the same room and within direct sight of their caregiver. Teenagers are treated as adult users. However, they are still legally the responsibility of their parents and should have an emergency contact available. Teenagers using inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the library. This is a particular concern in inclement weather and after dark.

If an unattended child acts in a manner not in compliance with the library's Patron Behavior Policy, staff members will:

1. Speak to the child and suggest alternate behavior.
2. Ask the child for the first and last name of parent/caregiver who brought him/her to the library.
3. Walk the child through the library to find the parent/caregiver who brought him/her to the library.
4. Explain the library's policy concerning unattended children to the parent/caregiver.
5. If the child's parent/caregiver is not in the Library, a staff member will attempt to reach him/her by phone and ask that s/he take charge of the child as quickly as possible. When the parent/caregiver arrives, the staff member will explain the library policy concerning unattended children.
6. If the parent cannot be contacted, staff will call the police or Sheriff's office.

If unattended children under the age of eighteen (18) are in the Library at closing:

1. A staff member will call local law enforcement officials.
2. A staff member will remain with the child until s/he is turned over to a parent/caregiver or law enforcement official.
3. Under NO circumstances will a staff member drive a child home.
4. An Incident Report is prepared by the employee managing the incident, documenting the date of the incident, name and age of the child, time child was discovered unattended, if and how employees attempted to reach parents, time authorities were called and when they arrived and the names of CDL employees who managed the incident.

If a parent/caregiver reports s/he has lost a child in the library:

1. Notify the Circulation staff to watch the front door.
2. Determine where the person has searched and when the child was last seen.
3. Get a description of the child, including clothing worn.
4. Have all staff search their area for a child by that description.
5. If the child is not located after a quick check, notify the police and ask the parent to stay close to the Circulation Desk until they arrive.

Board Approved January 2021