

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.

The Library is not responsible for safety and comfort of unattended children. The Library is a public place and unattended children are vulnerable. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the Library rests solely with the parent/caregiver and not with library staff.

The Library will not monitor or police unattended children or their browsing in any way. Cass District Library considers reading, listening, and viewing library materials to be individual, private matters and believes that full, confidential, and unrestricted access to information is essential for all patrons to exercise their constitutional rights. Cass District Library affirms, adopts, and will act consistent with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, and the Freedom to View Statement. Consistent with the American Library Association, the Library adopts and will abide by the following:

"The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize libraries and their governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As "Libraries: An American Value" states, "We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services."⁴ Libraries and their governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Libraries and their governing bodies shall ensure that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's—and only their children's—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their own children. Libraries and library governing bodies should not use rating systems to inhibit a minor's access to materials. Libraries and their governing bodies have a legal and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the communities they serve have free and equitable access to a diverse range of library resources and services that is inclusive, regardless of content, approach, or format. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Libraries and their governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors."

Staff members are not responsible if unattended children leave the library premises

alone or with other persons.

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.

If an unattended child acts in a manner not in compliance with the library's Patron Behavior Policy, staff members may ask the child to leave. If the child is aged 12 or under and the child's parent/caregiver cannot be located, the police may be called for assistance.

If unattended children under the age of eighteen (18) are in the Library at closing and are unable to leave the Library, a staff member will ask the child for the telephone number of someone who can pick them up from the library.

If transportation is not available within 15 minutes of closing:

1. A staff member will call local law enforcement officials.
2. Two staff members 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 and they are unable to locate them, staff will contact local law enforcement for assistance in locating the missing child.

This policy supersedes all previous editions

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