



The North Shore Library Children and the Library Policy

The North Shore Library (NSL) encourages families with children to browse our collection, attend our programs, and utilize our services. We are committed to providing resources that will bolster young people's interest in books, reading, and libraries so they will carry that interest with them throughout their lives.

Though the library is considered a safe space, it is still a public building. The responsibility for children using the library rests with their parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, and not with library staff. Although staff will always respond with care and concern, they cannot and will not assume responsibility for a child's conduct or safety.

For the purposes of this policy, a caregiver is defined as a parent, legal guardian, or responsible person at least 14 years of age or older. A guardian is an adult legally responsible for a child (e.g., parent or legal guardian). The word child refers to those from birth through 12 years old.

Children Visiting the Library

Children aged eight (8) years or under shall be accompanied by a caregiver at all times. The caregiver should remain close enough that the child is within visual contact. Children aged eight years or under may attend storytimes or other staff-led children's programs without their caregiver in the room. However, the caregiver must remain in the library building. Upon completion of a library program, caregivers are required to pick up their child at the doors of the program area. Children eight years old and younger will not be allowed to search for their caregiver in the library.

Children aged nine (9) and up are invited to use the library and attend programs without caregiver supervision provided their behavior meets the standards expected of our library patrons. Caregivers who drop their child off at the library should know when a program their child is attending ends and/or the closing time of the library.

If a child is left at the library without a ride at closing time, a staff member will attempt to contact their guardian. Two staff members will remain with the child for up to 15 minutes. If after 15 minutes a guardian has not arrived, the police department in the jurisdiction where the library is located shall be contacted. The police department shall make the determination on the handling of the child.

While the caregiver is ultimately responsible for their child's safety while visiting the library, the NSL has created an *Unattended and Missing Children Procedure* using resources from the CODE ADAM program from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Copies of the *Unattended and Missing Children Procedure* will be provided upon request.

Inappropriate Behavior

When present, caregivers are responsible for the behavior of their children. If library staff determine that any child is behaving in an unacceptable or unruly manner or is not coping adequately, staff will notify the caregivers or, if necessary, the police department

The following is considered unacceptable behavior:

- Engaging in disorderly conduct, committing a nuisance, or unreasonably disturbing and/or offending library users.
- Displaying other behaviors inappropriate in a public library setting. Examples include running, throwing, fighting, or moving furniture.
- Vandalism such as damaging library materials or furniture, leaving the restrooms in disarray, marking the exterior of the building or sidewalks.
- Any other behaviors in violation of the North Shore Library Code of Conduct or deemed inappropriate by the Library Director (or Librarian in Charge).

If a child is involved in unacceptable behavior the following actions will be taken:

1. The caregiver or unattended child, if they are unaccompanied by an adult, will be notified that they are disturbing others and be asked to stop.
2. If the disruptive behavior continues, library staff will notify the caregiver or unattended child with a second warning, informing them that if the behavior doesn't end immediately they will be asked to leave the building.
3. If the disruptive behavior continues after the issued verbal warnings, library staff will tell the caregiver or unattended child they need to leave the library. For unattended children, library staff will attempt to try to reach their guardian. If they cannot be reached, the police may be called.

Internet Usage

Children may use the internet in the library without parental permission, as long as they have a valid Milwaukee County Federated Library System library card. Guardians of children who use the internet are encouraged to become familiar with the Netsmartz program created by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Circulation of Materials to Children

Library staff and trustees are charged with the responsibility of providing free and equal access to Library materials and services to all eligible people including children (See the *Freedom to Read* and *Freedom to View* Statements adopted by the Library Board of Trustees). It is impossible for them to know or predict the opinions of guardians regarding the specific borrowing selections made by children.

It is the policy of the North Shore Library that guardians, not the library staff or trustees, are responsible for monitoring and approving the selection of materials made by their children. It is the guardians alone who may restrict their children – and only their children – from borrowing specific library materials. Guardians who wish their children not to have access to certain materials should accompany or otherwise advise their children. The library staff and trustees cannot and will not act in place of the guardians.

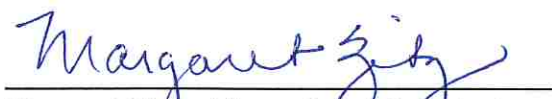
The library does not restrict access to any material by age and leaves the responsibility for children's use of its materials to each child's guardian. Guardians are strongly encouraged to monitor their own child's use of the library and its materials.

Library Card Eligibility

The North Shore Library has no age restrictions on when a child may get their first library card. To finalize any library card application, however, children must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

Items checked out on a child's card are the responsibility of the guardian. Guardians agree to obey the rules and regulations of the NSL, to return materials in a timely manner, and to promptly pay all fines and charges associated with their child's card should they be incurred. They also agree to report any change of address, telephone number, or email address to the library for their child's account.

Approved by the Library Board
North Shore Library
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Margaret Zitzer, Library Board President



Rhonda K. Gould, Library Director