

## Ashland Public Library Children's Room Policy

The staff of the Children's Department at the Ashland Public Library strives to create a warm, inviting, fun environment for children of all ages. The library offers many programs and services that encourage children to develop a love of books, reading and learning. The library attempts to provide a safe environment for children to select books and other materials and to participate in library programs.

The safety and well-being of children at the library is of serious concern. Young children are safe when supervised by a parent or adult caregiver while in the library. Parents should remember that the library is a public building available for the use of all. For the protection and well-being of children who enjoy libraries, the following policy has been established:

- All children ages 0-5 must be in the same room/area as and continually supervised by a parent or adult caregiver while in the library. Children ages 6-10 must be accompanied by a parent or adult caregiver, but the adult may be elsewhere in the Library, as long as the child knows exactly where to locate the adult at all times. If the responsible adult needs to leave the Library building for any reason and any amount of time, the child must go with the adult. The Ashland Police Department recommends children under the age of 12 not be left alone in the library.
- At the discretion of a responsible adult, a child age 10 or older may be left unattended for the period of time needed to select materials, complete a homework assignment, or attend a program. The child must know how to reach the responsible adult in case this need should arise. Children should not be left for excessively long (more than 2 hours) periods of time.
- Children will be expected to display appropriate behavior, conducive to maintaining a peaceful atmosphere in the library for all patrons.
- Bicycles should be left on the racks provided outside the building. In-line skates, skateboards, balls or other sports equipment should not be brought into the library.
- Children Left At Closing: Children and their adult caregivers should be aware of the closing times of the library. If a child has been left at the library without a ride or assistance home at closing time, every attempt will be made to contact a family member or caregiver by telephone. Staff are not permitted to remain after hours with an unattended child nor give them a ride home or to any other location. If a family member or caregiver cannot be reached, the Ashland Police will be called to escort the child home or to keep the child until parents can be reached. A staff member will remain with the child until the police have arrived. The Library Director will be informed whenever this action becomes necessary. The Director will contact the child's parent or caregiver to explain the library policy and why the action was required.
- Children under age 6 who wish to use a computer must be supervised by an adult. It is the responsibility of a parent or adult caregiver to ensure appropriate use of the electronic library resources by young children. Pounding on keyboards and other potentially damaging activities are not permitted.
- Children under the age of 10 must be accompanied by an adult on the elevator.

- Food may not be consumed in the Children's Room but covered drinks are allowed. (There is a Cafe area just outside the Children's Room where food may be eaten.)
- Parents or caregivers must stay in the library building while their child under the age of 10 is attending a library sponsored program. Children attending library programs are supervised by the library staff only during the scheduled time of the program.
- Parents or caregivers, not library staff, are responsible for the actions and safety of children visiting the library.
- Shoes and shirts must be worn while in the library. If, for some reason, shoes cannot be worn, children must be wearing socks. No bare feet allowed in the library.
- The library cannot assume responsibility for children while a parent or caregiver is participating in a library program or other activity in the library.
- The parent or caregiver is responsible for ensuring the appropriate behavior of their children in the library. Disruptive behavior, such as shouting, running, pushing, or other loud or physical activities, will not be tolerated. Children who continue to be disruptive will be asked to leave the building. In the case of an unaccompanied child between the ages of 10 and 12 years old, an attempt will be made to contact a family member or caregiver to pick them up. If a family member or caregiver cannot be reached, the Ashland Police Department may be contacted at the discretion of library staff. The parent or caregiver is liable for all damage done by their children to the library facility or equipment.

Approved Board of Library Trustees 1/11/2022, to be reviewed **yearly** starting January 2023