UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY

The Newton Free Library welcomes children of all ages and strives to create a warm, inviting learning environment. The Library offers many programs and services that encourage children to develop a love of books and reading. However, the Library is a public building, and the wellbeing of young children left alone at the Library is a serious concern. Young children are not safe when left unattended in any public place, including a library. In addition, children left alone for too long can become bored, frightened, or disruptive. The responsibility for children using the Library rests with the child's parent, guardian, or a designated adult caregiver.

The safety and wellbeing of every child is very important and to ensure their protection, the Newton Free Library has adopted the following policy:

- Children 9 years old and younger must be accompanied and supervised by their caregiver at all times in the Children's Room and the Library, except when participating in scheduled library programs that do not require caregiver participation. Caregivers must take charge of their children as soon as a library program is over.

- Children under the age of 12 may not act as caregivers for younger children.

- Caregivers are responsible for the conduct of their child(ren) while in the Library. All visitors, regardless of age, are expected to follow Library policies; failure to comply may result in suspension of Library privileges.

- During normal operating hours, if the caregiver of an unattended child (9 years old or younger) cannot be located, the Newton Police Department will be contacted.

- If there is an unattended child present at closing time, the Library will attempt to contact the child's caregivers. If a caregiver does not arrive at the Library by closing, the Newton Police Department will be contacted.

- Whenever staff must stay after closing to watch a child until the police arrive, the building senior on duty must be informed and designate at least two staff members to wait with the child for the police. A Library incident report will be prepared in this case. If the caregiver arrives before the police, include the name and contact information of the caregiver in the report.

- Under no circumstances will a staff member transport a minor to another location.

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on December 21, 2016.
Amended May 28, 2025.