

Elkhart Lake Public Library – Safe Child Policy

The Elkhart Lake Public Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for patrons of all ages by setting policies to promote safety within the building. The library is a public place and anyone may enter and use the facilities. No public place, including the library, can guarantee the safety of children. Children left alone in the building can be vulnerable and at risk, or may become bored and disruptive if left on their own for extended periods of time. An emergency could dictate the evacuation of the building or early closing time.

Library staff have many duties to perform to serve its patrons and cannot monitor the whereabouts or behavior of unsupervised children. It is not the library's role to provide long or short-term childcare.

This policy reflects the library's concern for the safety of children in the library. Library staff are not authorized or mandated to act *in loco parentis* (in place of a parent). Parents, guardians, or caregivers are responsible for the behavior and welfare of children visiting and using the library. All library patrons are expected to follow the library's Code of Conduct, regardless of age.

Safe Child Guidelines:

1. Children under the age of 7 must be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult or caregiver (age 12 or older). If a child under the age of 7 is found to be unattended or is involved in inappropriate or disruptive behavior, library staff will attempt to contact the parent or caregiver and will inform them of the Safe Child Policy. If a parent or guardian cannot be located, the police may be called.
2. Children who are 7 and older are welcome to use the library independently, but parents are still responsible for their behavior and welfare while they are visiting and using the library. Children who use inappropriate or disruptive behavior may be asked to leave the library. Children using the library independently should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in case of an emergency.
3. Library staff do not monitor the materials or resources that patrons browse, use, or borrow regardless of the patron's age. Parents or caregivers are responsible for supervising their child's access to all library resources including the internet.
4. Parents, guardians, and caregivers should be aware of the library's hours and make suitable arrangements to meet and/or transport their children at least 15 minutes prior to closing. In the event that a minor child is not picked up by closing, library staff may notify the police to assume custody of the child.
5. When children attend library programs where adult supervision is not required, a parent or caregiver is expected to pick up their children as soon as the program ends.

Adopted Library Board of Trustees

October 14, 2004

May 12, 2007 Revised

Revised August 8, 2014 Name of police and caregiver age

Revised May 11, 2026