



Safe Child Policy

Pembroke Public Library

General Principles and Purpose

The Library encourages frequent visits by children and their families. However, Library staff cannot provide child care or assume responsibility for children's safety. Parents, guardians, teachers, and caregivers, not Library staff, are responsible for the behavior and safety of children visiting the Library. Staff cannot be placed in the position of supervising unattended children. For the protection and well-being of children who enjoy libraries, the following policy has been established.

Age for Independent Library Use

Children of all ages are welcome in the Library. Children using the Library on their own must know how to reach an adult in case of an emergency, and both children and adults need to be aware of Library hours.

Children aged 7 and under must have a caregiver/chaperone in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child. The accompanying caregiver/chaperone must be age 14 or older. Parents/caregivers are required to stay in the room or in the youth area until the end of the program in which a child under the age of 8 is attending or participating.

Children aged 8 to 10 years old must have a caregiver/chaperone in the Library building with them and knowledge of where and how to locate their caregiver. The accompanying caregiver/chaperone must be age 14 or older. Parents/caregivers are required to stay in the Library until the end of the program in which a child aged 8 to 10 is attending or participating.

Children ages 11 and up may use the Library on their own, but will be asked to leave if they are exhibiting inappropriate behavior. Children are expected to behave in a manner that preserves a comfortable atmosphere for all patrons. (Please refer to the Library Use Policy.) Children using the Library on their own must know how to reach a caregiver/chaperone in case of emergency.

Disruptive Children

All children, regardless of age, are expected to follow the Library Use Policy and may be asked to leave the Library if exhibiting inappropriate behavior. In the event of a disruption, the disruptive child will be informed of the rules by a Library staff member. If the behavior continues and the child is aged 10 or under, a staff member will notify the child's caregiver/chaperone. If the behavior continues and the child is aged 10 and up, a staff member will remind the disruptive child of the rules. If the behavior persists, the child will be asked to leave the Library. The Library assumes no responsibility for the whereabouts of an unattended child who has been asked to vacate Library property.

Emergency and After Hours

In case of medical emergency, when a caregiver/chaperone is not with the child, staff will contact emergency services and then the parent or guardian, in that order.

Library staff is not responsible for supervising children left alone when the Library is closing or closed. Children who do not have transportation home at closing time will be asked for telephone numbers of people who can pick them up at the Library. If a child is not picked up within 10 minutes of closing, Library staff will call the Pembroke Police Department. Two staff members will stay with the child until the Pembroke Police Department or a caregiver arrives. Under no circumstances will library staff transport or take a child away from the library building.

Lost Child

When the staff notices a child in distress, they will ask the child where their caregiver/chaperone is. A staff member will search for the caregiver/chaperone with the child. If the caregiver/chaperone is not found within 10 minutes, the Pembroke Police Department will be called. Two staff members will accompany the child until they arrive.

Missing Child Lockdown Procedure

To assist caregivers/chaperones in keeping children safe in the library building, the Library staff, in cooperation with the Pembroke Police Department, will implement the following Lockdown Procedure upon report of a missing child:

1. If a patron approaches you and says that a child is missing, quickly get a detailed description including:
 - a. Name
 - b. Age
 - c. Hair color
 - d. Approx. height
 - e. What the child is wearing (color of shirt, jacket, pants, etc., type of shoes, etc.)
 - f. Where and when did you see the child last?
2. If the missing child alert begins in the Children's Room, notify the Main Desk and then all staff members will assist with the missing child procedure.
3. Children's Room staff will remain in place to observe the story garden exit and monitor for the missing child.
4. A staff member from the Main Room should immediately cover the main exit and observe the meeting door and the restrooms. Employees will request all people attempting to leave the building to remain within the Library and will request any people attempting to enter to remain outside. Direct service to patrons will be suspended while Lockdown procedures are in progress.
5. Another staff member will quickly search immediate area accompanying caregiver/chaperone. If child is **not** found within 10 minutes, Library staff will proceed to Step 6.
6. Senior Staff will call 911 and request "immediate police assistance for missing child at Pembroke Public Library."
7. Library Staff will wait for Pembroke police to arrive and then assist the responding officer

as requested.

8. If any Library staff encounter a suspect with the missing child, other than the caregiver/chaperone, Library staff should use reasonable measures to delay the exit of the suspect and child without placing themselves or the child at risk. Employee should obtain and immediately record a full description of the suspect, including the make, model and license number of the vehicle (if any) and direction of travel and pass this information onto the Pembroke Police Department.
9. When child is found inform all staff members (and police as needed). Inform Director and document incident.

Approved and Voted by the Board of Library Trustees April 20, 2022. Revised and approved November 19, 2025.