

# Pembroke Public Library

## Safe Child Policy

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### I. Purpose

- a. 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.

### II. Child Age and Library Use

- a. **Children up to age 7** must have a parent/caregiver *in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact* with the child. Children ages 7 and under must be accompanied by someone **over the age of 13**.
- b. **Children ages 8 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 conducive to maintaining an appropriate atmosphere in the building for all patrons. (Please refer to the Standards of Conduct Policy.)
- c. Parents/caregivers are required to stay in the room or in the youth area until the end of the program when a child under the age of 8 is attending or participating.
- d. 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.

### III. Disruptive Children

- a. The child will be informed of the rules by a Library staff member.
- b. If the behavior continues, the staff member will notify the parents of the child.
- c. If the behavior still persists, the child will be asked to leave the Library.

### IV. Lost Child

- a. When the staff notices a child in distress, they will ask where their parents are.
- b. A staff employee will search for the parents with the child.
- c. If the parents are not found within 15 minutes, the police will be called.
- d. Two staff members will accompany the child until they arrive.

## V. Closing

- a. 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 15 minutes of closing,** Library staff will call the police. Two staff members will stay with the child until the situation is resolved.

## VI. Emergency

- a. In case of a medical emergency, when parents cannot be reached, the Library staff will dial 911.

## VII. Report of a Missing Child

- a. To assist parents/guardians and caregivers in keeping children safe in the library building, the Library staff, in cooperation with the Pembroke Police, will implement the following Lockdown procedure upon report of a missing child.

## VIII. Lockdown Procedure

- a. Obtain a detailed description of the child

If a patron approaches you and says that a child is missing, quickly get a detailed description including:

- \* Name
- \* Age
- \* Hair color
- \* Eye color
- \* Approx. weight and height
- \*What the child is wearing (color of shirt, jacket, pants, etc., type of shoes, etc.)
- \*Where and when did you see the child last?

- b. If missing child alert begins in Children's Room, notify the Main Desk and then all staff members will assist with missing child procedure.
- c. Children's Room staff will remain to observe the story garden exit and begin monitoring for the missing child.
- d. 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 remain within the library and will request any people attempting to enter to remain outside. Direct service to patrons will be suspended while Lock-down procedures are in progress.

- e. Another staff member will quickly search immediate area accompanying parent/guardian or caregiver. If child is **not** found within 10 minutes proceed to Step f.
- f. Senior Staff will call 911 and request "immediate police assistance for missing child at Pembroke Public Library".
- g. Employees will wait for Pembroke police to arrive and then assist the responding officer as requested.

- h. If any employee(s) encounter a suspect with the missing child, other than the parent/caregiver, employees should use reasonable measures to delay the exit of the suspect and child without placing himself or herself 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 Police Department.
- a. When child is found inform all staff members (and police as needed).
- b. Inform Director and document incident.

Approved and Voted by the Trustees April 20, 2022