

# **Vineyard Haven Public Library Child Safety Policy**

*Approved May 25, 2016*

## **Introduction**

The Vineyard Haven Public Library strives to provide a safe, educational and enjoyable place for children to develop a love of books and reading, as well as a place to find materials which serve their informational, educational, and recreational needs. While library staff take their responsibility to provide safe access to the library very seriously, it is important that parents or guardians fulfill their responsibility for their children's safety and well-being. The Child Safety Policy has been adopted to ensure a safe and pleasant library experience for all children.

## **Unattended Children**

Children of all ages are welcome to visit the library. However, it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their appropriate behavior. The Library staff is not responsible for supervising children left unattended by parents or caregivers.

For the purposes of this policy, an unattended child refers to a child who is in the library alone, or a child whose parent or caregiver is in the library but is not adequately supervising that child. The latter situation may occur when the adult and child are in separate areas of the building, or when an adult is using the library materials or equipment and is not supervising the child.

Children eight and older may use the library unattended, but are subject to the rules and regulations in effect regarding behavior and conduct, including the Library Rules of Conduct. Children under the age of eight must be accompanied by a responsible person who is at least 14 years of age. Parents and guardians should be advised that if their children misbehave, the child may be requested to leave the library. A staff member will advise the child to stop the behavior. If disruptive behavior continues a staff member will ask the child to leave the library. If the parent/caregiver is not elsewhere in the building, the staff member will allow the child to call for transportation. The child may not return for the duration of that day.

The Vineyard Haven Public Library assumes no responsibility for children of any age left unattended in the library.

## **Unattended Children at Closing Time**

Parents and guardians must pick up children 10 minutes prior to closing. Parents and guardians are expected to know the opening and closing times of the library, bearing in mind that the time can and does change in case of emergencies.

Should it be determined that a child has been left at the library, without a ride or assistance home at closing time, the Tisbury Police Department may be called and the child transferred to their custody.

## **Unaccompanied Adults**

The Children's area is reserved for use by children, their parents or caregivers, and patrons using the children's collections. Adults and teens unaccompanied by a child may enter the Children's area to obtain books or other materials but extended browsing by unaccompanied adults and teens is not encouraged, and library staff may at their discretion request them to leave the Children's area.

The Young Adult area is reserved for use by teens in middle school and high school, their parents or caregivers, and patrons using the young adult collections. Adults and children unaccompanied by a teen may enter the Young Adult area to obtain books or other materials but extended browsing by unaccompanied adults and children is not encouraged, and library staff may at their discretion request them to leave the Young Adult area.

*Adapted with permission from the Beverly Public Library Child Safety Policy, April 2016*