

Safe Child Policy

The Children's Room at the Athol Public Library provides services to children from birth to eleven years of age. Parents, child care providers, and children are expected to use the Children's Room to participate actively in reading, programs, and in the selection and use of library resources. For the safety of all children, adults who are not accompanied by children are to use the Children's Room only for the purpose of retrieving materials for check out or to make arrangements to retrieve materials in other areas of the library.

Parents and child care providers, not library staff, are responsible for the safety of children visiting the library. To ensure the safety and well-being of every child the Athol Public Library has adopted the following policy:

1. Children 8 years and younger must be accompanied and supervised at all times by a parent or child care provider at least 14 years of age.
2. The responsible party should be in the same room as the child while in the library building.
3. When a child is attending a supervised library program, the parent or child care provider is not always required to attend, but should be in the building when the program is over.
4. Children 9-11 years old may be left unsupervised for the period of time needed to select materials, complete a homework assignment, attend a program, or engage in an activity deemed appropriate by the librarian on duty.
5. Children must know how to reach a caregiver should the need arise. If an attempt is made by library staff and a parent or child care provider cannot be reached, the Athol Police Department may be contacted.

Parents or guardians that violate the library's policy will be given a copy of this policy and informed of any infractions. If parents or guardians continually abuse the policy after being warned, they will be banned from the library and the police will be notified of unattended children being left in the library.

Behavior Policy

All children are expected to engage in appropriate behavior conducive to maintaining a safe and productive library environment for all patrons. Parents and guardians must realize that, even in their absence, they are legally responsible for their child's actions. (Please refer to the Policy Governing the Use of the Library).

Procedure on Patron Behavior

Patrons that violate library behavior standards are subject to the following procedure:

1. Two verbal warnings will be given, and, if the behavior does not improve, the patron will be told to leave the library grounds for the day, and an incident report will be filed.
2. The library staff reserves the right to ask a patron to leave immediately (no warnings) if the situation warrants it. This decision will be made by library staff and is not negotiable.
3. If a pattern of disruptive behavior has developed (as documented by incident reports) the library reserves the right to suspend library privileges. (See the procedure on Patron Behavior for further information).