



## **Child Safety Policy**

La Crosse County Library is dedicated to providing a safe and welcoming environment for families and children.

To make the Library an enjoyable place and to encourage a love of reading and learning, we offer designated children's areas, programs, and services for young people.

Adopted by the La Crosse County Library Board 01-2025

### **Access to Children's Areas**

The Children's area is specifically designed to serve the needs of young patrons. Adults in that area not using Children's materials or not using the area for the purpose intended may be asked to use other areas of the Library. Staff members will place the safety of children first. Adults with children in their charge are the only adults allowed to use the restrooms located in Children's areas.

### **Caregiver Expectations and Responsibilities**

Because the Library is a public place, children's safety cannot be guaranteed. Children may encounter hazards such as doors, furniture, or electrical equipment or other patrons. The conduct, safety, and supervision of children while on Library premises are the responsibility of parents, guardians, and caregivers 16 years or older. It is the responsibility of parents, guardians, and caregivers to determine the supervision needs of their children and to provide accordingly.

While our staff values the safety of children, only parents, guardians, and caregivers can provide appropriate supervision of children. Appropriate supervision provided by parents, guardians, and caregivers will assist Library staff in creating a pleasant and safe environment for Library patrons of all ages.

Children's use of all library materials and equipment, including the Internet, is the sole responsibility of their parent or guardian.

### **Staff Role**

Library staff members have many duties to fulfill and cannot supervise children in the Library or when the child leaves the building. However, if a staff member is concerned that a child may not be sufficiently capable and mature to be on Library premises without supervision, the staff member may act to correct the situation and will inform Library management of the concerns and the actions taken.

Staff reserve the right to require more direct supervision for children under the age of 8 from caregivers, including limiting the use of the internet by caregivers. Library staff may also inform children their behavior is unsafe or disruptive to others. Children ages 8 and older, who do not comply, may be asked to leave the library under the Library's Code of Conduct and Suspension guidelines.

Any child who feels unsafe in the library for any reason should inform a library staff member.

In order to ensure a positive Library experience for everyone, if a child appears not to be sufficiently capable or mature to be on Library premises without supervision, normally those under the age of 8:

a. Staff will try to comfort the child if the child is ill, hungry or upset. Staff will make a concerted effort to locate the child's parent, guardian, or caregiver in the Library and express the Library's concern for the child's safety and explain the Library's Child Safety Policy. If staff is unable to locate the parent, guardian, or caregiver in the Library, staff will make a concerted effort to contact the parent, guardian or caregiver to pick up the child. Staff will express the Library's concern for the child's safety and explain the Library's Child Safety Policy. If the parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be located within a reasonable time, staff will call the local Police Department

b. Staff will encourage any unattended child under the age of 8 to contact his or her parent, guardian, or caregiver before closing time. If a parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be reached or does not arrive within 15 minutes after closing, Library staff will call the local Police Department to pick up the child. Staff must inform a manager that the Police have been notified. These same actions will be followed for emergency closures. A staff member will remain with the child until the parent, guardian, caregiver or police arrive. Once the child is in the protective care of the Police Department, a note will be attached to the Library entrance or entrances, with the following information: "Unattended child is in the care of the Police Department." Neither the name of the child nor the name of the parent, guardian, or caregiver will be listed on the note. Staff will be compensated for their additional time.

c. Staff will not transport any child from the Library to another location.

## **Enforcement**

Enforcement of the Child Safety Policy will be conducted in a fair and reasonable manner.