

Child Safety Policy

The La Crosse Public 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 books, reading, and learning, we offer designated children's areas, programs, and services for young people. We hope you will help your children make effective use of the Library and assist them in selecting books and materials, using the computers, or attending programs. Together, we can provide a fun and positive experience when visiting the La Crosse Public Library.

Access to Children's Areas

The Children's area of the Library 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 will 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 stairs, elevators, 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. 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 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 who do not comply may be asked to leave the library.

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:

- 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 La Crosse Police Department. The La Crosse Police Department will then assume responsibility for the child. Staff will notify a Manager that the La Crosse Police Department has been called.
- b. Staff will encourage any unattended child 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 a reasonable time after closing, Library staff will call the La Crosse Police Department to pick up the child. Staff will inform a manager that the La Crosse Police have been notified. These same actions will be followed for emergency closures. Two staff members will remain with the child until the parent, guardian, caregiver or police arrive. Once the child is in the protective care of the La Crosse 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 La Crosse Police Department." Neither the name of the child nor the name of the parent, guardian, or caregiver will be listed on the note.
- 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. Any concerns about the enforcement of this policy may be addressed through our feedback form.

Approved by the La Crosse Public Library Board of Trustees 8/8/2023