

Forbush Memorial Library encourages children to use the library and is committed to providing a full range of resources, services, and programs for children, tweens, teenagers, and young adults.

The Board of Library Trustees believes that all children:

- Have the right to enjoy the books, toys, and programs while in the Children's Room
- Have the right to use library computers in accordance with the Library Technology Acceptable Use Policy
- May borrow materials in accordance with library borrowing rules and guidance from their parents/guardians when they are old enough to have a library card—if their account is in good standing

This policy has been adopted to provide a safe and comfortable environment for library patrons of all ages. It is in addition to the Personal Behavior Policy.

Parents and legal guardians are responsible for the behavior of their children while in Forbush Memorial Library. Librarians, staff, and volunteers are NOT responsible for children who are unattended in the library.

The library recognizes its obligation to consider the safety and welfare of children while they are in the library. While libraries carry with them an illusion of safety, public libraries, by their nature, are subject to "stranger danger" and are not necessarily safe for unattended children. We recommend that caregivers discuss personal safety with their children.

Guidelines for unattended children

1. Parents, legal guardians, or caregivers may not leave children age of 10 years or younger unattended in the library. They should be attentive to their children's activities and keep them within sight.
2. Children between the ages of 11 and 13 may be left unattended for short periods of time when attending library programs, doing research for school projects, or finding materials to check out.
 - If inappropriate behavior disturbs other library users, the child will be warned once. If the behavior continues, the child will be asked to leave the building.
 - Parents and legal guardians should be comfortable with the fact that books and DVDs housed in places other than the Children's Room are meant for adult consumption and may not be appropriate for certain age groups. In addition, computers throughout the library do not have filtering software and usage is not restricted by age. It is parents'/legal guardians' responsibility to be aware of what their children are reading, viewing, hearing, or borrowing.
3. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for picking up children ages 15 and under left unattended at the library's closing time. Staff is NOT permitted to remain after closing time with a child or to give them a ride home.
 - Should it appear that a child has been left at the library without a ride home 30 minutes before closing time, an attempt will be made to contact the parent/legal guardian or a family member.

- If an adult or family member cannot be reached, the Westminster Police Department may be notified to escort the child home or keep the child until the parents/legal guardians can be reached. Staff will remain with the child until the police have arrived. The Library Director will be notified and will explain the policy to the parent/legal guardian and why the action was required.

Child conduct guidelines

Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children in the library whether the parent/legal guardian is present in the library or not. Please help to ensure that everyone has a positive experience in the library. Examples of problematic behavior include:

- Running around the Children's Room or climbing on shelving
- Fighting with other children
- Destroying library property such as marking up the furniture, windows, walls, etc.
- Being disrespectful and inattentive during story hour or other children's programs
- Leaving toys scattered after play
- Misusing the water fountain/bubbler

If inappropriate behavior disturbs other library users, and continues after a warning, you may be asked to leave the building.

Emergency protocol

- If an emergency exists, emergency personnel will be called first and then the parents/legal guardians, in that order.
- Parents, legal guardians, or caregivers should make sure their children have their contact information with them.