

# **Child Protection Policy Cornwall Library Association**

The Library has established the following policy in order to protect our young people from verbal, physical, or sexual abuse or misconduct; and to protect staff and volunteers who work with them from false accusations.

## **General Requirements for Staff and Volunteers:**

All adults, youth and volunteers who work with minors should be evaluated and approved before beginning work. The process should include:

- Interview with the Library Director or other designated staff member
- Name and contact information of at least one reference, unrelated to the applicant, who has observed the applicant's interaction with the relevant age group.

## **General Rules**

- The "two person rule" will apply in any situation involving minors, whether volunteers or patrons. No adult is to be alone in a room with a minor, unless both parties are clearly visible at all times.
- Discretion is necessary in regard to physical contact with young people. We want our patrons to feel comfortable with staff and volunteers, and feelings of affection, particularly from younger children, are to be expected. However, it is important to remember that a friendly hug or touch may be perceived otherwise.

Staff and volunteers should never attempt to physically remove a minor from the library building or property. If a minor is behaving in an improper manner and refuses to leave on his or her own, staff should contact a parent or guardian.

The library will not permit or sanction corporal punishment of any kind or verbal threats by its staff or volunteers.

Reporting procedures are to be in accordance with Connecticut law. Anyone observing suspected harm to a minor is required to report it immediately to the Library Director.

### **Behavior of Volunteers**

We want every patron, employee and volunteer to be safe, comfortable, and welcome at our library. For that reason, volunteers who exhibit any of the following will not be permitted to work with minors:

- Contagious illness that may be spread through normal contact (airborne, touch, etc.)
- Extreme emotionality or repeated emotional outbursts.
- Engaging in threats, slurs, sexual epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual orientation, or consistent rudeness.
- Derogatory remarks or general condescending attitude towards children of any age.

### **Student Volunteers**

We are happy to have volunteers of any age. Young volunteers add a great deal of energy and enthusiasm to an event or program. To ensure a positive experience for all, we have the following requirements:

- Written permission will be on file for all volunteers under the age of 18, along with emergency contact information.
- While student volunteers may supervise a program or event, an adult must also be present at all times.

### **Patron Responsibilities:**

Library staff and volunteers make every effort to ensure the library is safe and secure, but they cannot monitor the behavior or whereabouts of each child. The following rules have therefore been established:

- Children age 9 or below must be accompanied by an adult (unless they are attending a supervised library program).

- The library is not a day care or babysitting service, and library staff cannot assume responsibility for children left at the library. If a child over 9 is allowed to come without a parent, it is assumed the parent feels the child is able to take care of him or herself. The library reserves the right, however, to require minors to have a parent or guardian present.
- Children of all ages are expected to follow the same code of conduct as adults. If at any time this code of conduct is broken, and warnings by library staff are ignored, the child will be told to contact a parent to pick him or her up.
- All children must be picked up by library closing time. Staff cannot be expected to remain after hours to supervise children.
- Parents are asked to speak with their children about safety among strangers. The library is a public building, and anyone may enter and spend time here. Children should know they can always come to a staff member if another patron is making them feel threatened or uncomfortable.

### **Computer use:**

- Computers in the children's area are only for the use of children age 11 and below.
- The children's computer is password protected. Staff will supply the password to the computer if a parent or guardian agrees to supervise the child's use of the computer.
- If a child is on a website that library staff deems inappropriate, the child will be asked to exit the site immediately. Attempts to return to the same sites may result in the loss of library privileges.

September, 2013