

Shedd – Porter Memorial Library
Children's Safety Policy
Approved August 2026

The Trustees and staff of the Shedd – Porter Memorial Library seek to provide a comfortable environment for all library users, and to be stewards of the town's property in our care. We encourage people of all ages to visit the library, and we hope to provide a safe and appropriate environment for visitors of all ages. Those using the library and its resources have the right to expect a safe, comfortable environment that supports library services. We expect all library users to observe common courtesy toward other library users and library staff.

The Shedd – Porter Memorial Library welcomes children to use the library and encourages frequent visits by children and their families. The staff will assist children in use of the library materials or services. However, the library cannot provide childcare or assume responsibility for children's safety. The library assumes no responsibility for children left unattended on library premises; the library does not act *in loco parentis*. To ensure the safety and well-being of the children, and to maintain an atmosphere of constructive library use, the Library Trustees have adopted the following policies:

- Responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of children using the library rests at all times with the child's parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver. Though library staff members will always respond with care and concern, they cannot assume responsibility for children's safety and comfort when using the library.
- Children under ten (10) years of age must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or an appropriate caregiver. Parents, guardians, teachers and caregivers must be close at hand and may not leave children alone or in the care of other children who are unable or unwilling to provide adequate care.
- Children ten (10) and older may use the library unaccompanied by an adult, provided they are mature enough to stay alone and observe proper conduct. Such children are subject to the same rules of conduct as other patrons. Inappropriate behavior includes (but is not limited to) misuse of library property and actions that deliberately disturb others or prevent the legitimate use of the library and its resources. The child must know how to and must be able to reach an adult (parent, guardian, or caregiver) at all times and in case of an emergency.
- Children and adults need to be aware of library hours which are posted on the Library webpage and on the book drop outside the main/front Library door. Parents and guardians are expected to adhere to the opening and closing times of the library, bearing in mind that these hours can and do change. Power failures, bad weather or other emergencies can necessitate the unexpected closing of the building.

- If the library staff finds that an unattended child is disrupting others or is not using the library in a safe and appropriate manner, the Staff may, as needed:
 - Ask the child to fix the inappropriate behavior.
 - If the parent or caregiver is located within the building, the staff will inform him/her of the library policy. If the parent/caregiver refuses, or is unable, to control the child, they will both be asked to leave the library.
 - In the event that the parent/caregiver is not in the building, attempts will be made to reach them by phone.
 - Contact authorities such as law enforcement either to assist with the enforcement of discipline or to ensure the safety of an unattended child.
 - If an unattended child becomes ill or injured and the child's parent, guardian or responsible caregiver cannot be contacted immediately, police and/or rescue personnel will be called.

Parents, guardians and responsible caregivers are advised that library staff are only permitted to supervise children outside of the library building in conjunction with library programs. If the Police are unavailable at the time they are called, a staff person will remain with the child until the police can respond, or the child's parent/guardian arrives.

CLOSING TIME: Unattended children at the library must be picked up no later than five minutes before closing time. Children left unattended at closing time will have the opportunity to contact their parent, guardian or responsible caregiver. If no contact can be made, or if a ride has not arrived within 10 minutes after closing, the police will be called to supervise the child until the adult arrives. Library employees are not permitted to transport children to another location.