

## BENNINGTON FREE LIBRARY SAFE CHILD POLICY

### **Introduction**

Library staff have many duties to perform in order to serve all the members of our community. They cannot monitor the behavior or whereabouts of each patron, including children. Staff members do not assume parental responsibilities for children who come into the library. It is for the safety of each child that the library has adopted this Safe Child Policy.

Parents/caregivers are responsible for the child's behavior at all times while in the building. A caregiver is defined as an individual who is at least 13 years old and acknowledges responsibility for the child. **Children under the age of 9 must remain in the company of a parent or caregiver at all times.**

### **Child Left Unattended**

Unattended children under the age of 9 will be accompanied by a staff member who will try to identify and locate the parents/ caregiver:

If the parent or caregiver cannot be located in the library building, a staff member will monitor the child until the parent/ caregiver returns to the library. When the parent or caregiver is located, the library policy on unattended children will be explained to the parent/caregiver.

### **Unattended Children after Closing Time**

Library staff must exercise appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of unattended children when the library is closing.

If no ride has arrived prior to closing time the staff will call the parent or caregiver. Two staff members will remain to monitor children left unattended. Parents are responsible for being aware of the times the library opens and closes and making appropriate arrangements to ensure children do not remain at the library beyond closing time. Upon arrival, the parent/caregiver will be informed of the **Unattended Children after Closing Time** policy.

Library staff members do not provide rides to children.

### **Unaccompanied Adults**

*The Children's areas within library facilities are reserved for use by children, their parents or caregivers, and adults using the children's collection.* Adults unaccompanied by a child may enter the Children's Room to obtain books or other materials, but are requested to move to adult reading/reference area once their selection has been made. Extended browsing by unaccompanied adults is not encouraged, and library staff may at their discretion request adult patrons to move to the library's adult reading/reference area.