San Mateo
Public Library

Child Safety Policy

[Revised by the Library Board of Trustees, 6/22/26

Purpose of Policy

The San Mateo Public Library is dedicated to providing a safe and welcoming environment for children of all ages. We encourage children and their families to visit the library, use its collections and computers, and participate in programs that support reading, learning, and exploration. The library is a public building that is open to all, and children are safest when they have appropriate supervision.

Role of Library Staff

Library staff assist and support children in using the library. However, the library is not equipped to provide short or long-term childcare and is not a substitute for supervised after-school or daycare programs. Staff cannot supervise, monitor, or assume responsibility for children left unattended.

Role of Caregivers

Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for monitoring the safety, behavior, health, and activities of the children in their care while at the library. A caregiver should be someone mature enough to stay close, pay attention, and provide appropriate support to the child.

If any of the situations below occur, staff will attempt to contact the parent or caregiver. If a parent or caregiver cannot be reached within a reasonable period of time, staff may contact local law enforcement for assistance.

- Children 10 years and under cannot be left unattended in the library at any time without caregiver supervision, including during storytime and other programs, unless specifically designated by the library as a drop-off program.
- Children 11 years of age and older who are comfortable being alone may use the library independently. However, caregivers remain responsible for the behavior and well-being of their children, whether or not they are present.
- Caregivers are expected to stay within eyesight of the child they are responsible for attending to.
- Children behaving inappropriately will be informed of the Library Rules of Conduct. If the inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be asked to leave the library. Depending on the infraction, staff may also contact the parent/caregiver or law enforcement (if the parent cannot be reached).
- If a child is found to be unattended when the library closes, staff will attempt to locate the child's parent/caregiver. If they cannot be reached, local law enforcement will be contacted to assist.