

## Safe Child Policy

The Library Board and staff of the Hawarden Public Library hope that children perceive our library as a fun and inviting place. We encourage children and families to visit our library, to take advantage of our resources and to develop a love of reading and libraries.

In an effort to provide an environment that allows everyone to use the library in a safe manner, the Library Board has adopted this policy concerning unattended children.

Parents are reminded that unexpected events can occur while their children are here unattended: the child could wander out of the library on his/her own; the child could be approached by untrustworthy people who sometimes visit public buildings; the child could be physically injured.

Parents or caregivers may not leave children under the age of 10 unattended in the library. A caregiver is defined as a parent, or another adult over the age of 17. Children over the age of 10 and older are considered to be “on their own” in the library and they must observe the Library Conduct Policy. If their behavior is unacceptable and does not improve after being asked to follow policy, the person will be asked to leave the library.

Parents are responsible for all library use by juveniles, up to and including age 17. Library staff do not act “in loco parentis” or in place of the parent. Library staff encourages parents to guide their children on appropriate use of library resources, as library staff will not prevent access to materials or resources, in compliance with the Freedom to Read and View and the Library Bill of Rights.

If a child has special challenges related to physical or mental ability, inconsistent behavior patterns, emotional problems, lack of adequate attention span, or incomplete social skills, that child must be supervised at all times.

The library assumes no responsibility for children left unattended on library premises. When the safety of an unattended child is in doubt, staff will contact parents or caregivers. If they are not readily available, the staff will contact the Hawarden Police Department, Sloux County Sheriff's Department or social services.

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