

CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY

The Pewaukee Public Library welcomes and encourages families and children to come to our Library. We are committed to providing resources and programs that motivate children's interest in books, reading, and libraries and promote a learning environment. We encourage parents or legal guardians to be aware of their child's reading activities and interests and to make Library time a pleasant family experience.

Staff members are here to assist children with their requests. Responsibility for the behavior and safety of children using the Library rests with the parent, the legal guardian or the caregiver assigned by the parent and not with library personnel. Library staff cannot supervise children.

Children Age Eight (8) and Under

The safety of children left unattended in the Library is a serious concern. Young children left on their own often become frightened or anxious. No public place, including the Library, can guarantee the safety of children. Staff members cannot know if a child is leaving the building with his/her parent(s) or with strangers. Children age eight (8) years or under, or children with special emotional and physical needs shall be accompanied by a parent or caregiver (at least 15 years of age) who must remain with the child at all times. Children age eight (8) years or under may attend Storytimes or other children's programs without their parent/caregiver in the room. However, the parent/caregiver must remain in the Library building and immediately join their child at the end of the program.

When a child age eight (8) or under is left unattended, staff shall employ the following procedure:

1. Attempt to comfort the child if necessary and ascertain the name of the child and the name of the parent or caregiver who brought him/her to the Library.
2. Assist the child in locating their parent or caregiver. A copy of this policy will be given to the parent or caregiver when located.
3. If a parent or caregiver cannot be located within 15 minutes (or immediately if the library is closing), a staff member shall contact the Village of Pewaukee Police Department for assistance. The Director shall be notified if the Police are contacted. Staff shall stay with the child until a parent, caregiver, or the Police arrive. (At the discretion of Library staff members, there may be exceptions to this rule.) If the Police pick up the child at closing time a staff member will leave a note informing the parent/caregiver on the parking lot entrance to the Library. Names will not be included on the note for confidentiality purposes.
4. Complete a Library Incident Report and submit it to the Director by the next working day.
5. The Library Director will send a letter to the parents or caregiver explaining the Library's policy if the name and address of the parent/caregiver is known.

Children Age Nine (9) and older

Minors age nine (9) to seventeen (17) are invited to use the Library and attend programs without parental supervision provided their behavior meets the standards expected of our library patrons. Parents should be aware of when a program ends as well as the closing time of the Library. If minors under the age of 15 are not picked up by closing time, two staff members will remain with

the child (children) for ten (10) minutes. If no one has arrived by that time, the Village of Pewaukee Police Department will be called to investigate.

If the Police are asked to pick up a minor, a staff member will leave a note for the parent/caregiver on the parking lot entrance to the Library. Names will not be included on the note for confidentiality purposes.

Library staff members may not transport children.

If Library staff determine that any child is behaving in an unacceptable or unruly manner or is not coping adequately, staff will contact the child's parents or caregivers or the Village of Pewaukee Police Department (*see Appropriate Behavior below*).

Inappropriate Behavior

Parents or caretakers are responsible for monitoring the behavior of their children. The following is considered unacceptable behavior:

- Loud conversation, laughter or noise which disturbs others
 - Engaging in disorderly conduct, committing a nuisance, or unreasonably disturbing and/or offending library users
 - Displaying other behaviors inappropriate in a public library setting, examples include running, throwing, fighting, or moving furniture
 - Vandalism will not be tolerated
- A. Disruptive attended children 8 years of age or younger:
1. The parent/caretaker will be informed that the child is disturbing others and asked to control child's behavior.
 2. If the parent/caretaker refuses or is unable to control the child the librarian in charge will ask the family to leave.
- B. Disruptive unattended children 9 years of age or older:
1. Child will be asked to behave and given a verbal warning or be asked to leave the building.
 2. If, after 10 minutes, the disruptive behavior continues, library staff will attempt to notify the child's parents to come pick up the child. If the parents are unable to be reached, the library staff will notify the Village of Pewaukee Police Department *to investigate*. Staff members cannot be expected to detain a minor until a parent, caregiver or police arrive.
 3. A minor who is asked to leave the building may not be allowed to return without being accompanied by an adult.

Internet Usage

Children and young adults may use the Internet terminals in the Library but anyone under eighteen (18) years of age must first have one of their parents or their official guardian sign a permission slip at the Children's Desk on the upper level of the Library or the Reference Desk on the lower level. Once the permission slip is signed the young patron will receive a sticker on their card indicating their parent/guardian is allowing Internet access. Children age twelve (12) and younger are encouraged to use the terminals in the Children's area but if all the terminals are in use they will be allowed to register at the adult terminals on the lower level. Older children (age thirteen (13) and above) may use the Internet terminals on both levels of the Library. Anyone with a sticker on their card must first go to either the Children's or Reference desks to sign in. Individuals under eighteen (18) years of age must have a library card or keychain card to use the Internet (*see Internet Policy*).

Circulation of Materials to Minors

The Library staff and trustees are charged with the responsibility of providing free and equal access to Library materials and services to all eligible people including minors (See the Freedom to Read and Freedom to View Statements adopted by the Library Board of Trustees). It is impossible for them to know or predict the opinions of parents and guardians regarding the specific borrowing selections made by minor children.

It is the policy of the Pewaukee Public Library that parents or guardians, not the Library staff or trustees, are responsible for monitoring and approving the selection of materials made by minor children. It is the parents or guardians – and only these – who may restrict their children – and only their children – from borrowing specific Library materials with the exception of R rated videos and DVDs which will not circulate to an individual 17 years of age or under. Parents or guardians who wish their children not to have access to certain materials should accompany or otherwise advise their children. The Library staff and trustees cannot and do not act in place of the parents/guardians.

Individuals under the age of 18 who check out any children's or young adult materials including children's or YA books, children's videos or DVDs, children's or YA magazines, children's or YA books-on-CD (or cassette) and children's music CDs are exempt from any fines but are expected to return materials on or before the due date so the items may be available to other patrons. Parents/guardians will be responsible for the replacement costs of lost or damaged Children's or young adult materials checked out by a minor.

Library Card Eligibility

Once a child turns five (5) years of age they are eligible to apply for a library card but they must be able to write or print their first and last name. For anyone under the age of eighteen (18) a parent or legal guardian must accompany the child/ teen to sign the library card registration form. The parent or legal guardian will be asked to prove identity and residency (a driver's license with current address is the best option) and co-sign the registration form for his/her child under the age of 18. By co-signing, the parent or legal guardian accepts responsibility for settling fines, damages, losses, or other assessments against the library card of his/her child.

Child Abuse

When a staff member observes suspected abuse or neglect on the part of a parent or responsible caregiver, staff shall contact the Village of Pewaukee Police Department or the Waukesha County Human Services Office to investigate.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees: January 16, 2008; Sally Ruf, Library Board President