

Child's Safety Policy

The Alva Public Library and Staff are pleased to welcome children and teens to the library facility and programs. **A top library priority is the provision of a safe environment for all library patrons, especially children and teens.** The function of the library is to provide access to informational and recreational resources and programming. The library is a public building with staff trained to serve the public and has many duties to perform in order to help all of our patrons in the best way possible. As a result, the staff cannot monitor the location, safety, or behavior of your child. A parent or legal guardian will be contacted and asked to remove a child if their behavior becomes disruptive. A teen will be asked to leave the library premises with a copy of this policy to serve as notification to the parent or legal guardian.

For the well-being and protection of the children who come to the library, the Alva Public Library and its board of directors has adopted the following children's policy.

Parents, Guardians, Caregiver's Responsibilities

- Parents, guardians, or legal caregivers are responsible for the safety, behavior, and supervision of their children at all times while in the library and on the library's property.
- Parents guardians, or legal caregivers are responsible for their children even when the parent is not present in the building.
- The library expects children left unattended to be mature enough to follow library rules, to take responsibility for their own safety, and to be able to leave the library without an adult.

Rules for minors in the library are as follows:

- Children 5 and under - If the child is 5 or under the supervising adult must be in the same part of the library as the child. Under no circumstances may children five and under be left unattended at the Library unless they are attending the Summer Reading program for their age and have demonstrated they can follow the rules while participating in the program.
- Children 6 and 8 - An adult guardian must be present in the library building to supervise children eight and under during their visit to the Library unless children are attending a library sponsored program for children.
- Children 9 and older - Children nine and older may use the library unattended as long as their conduct is acceptable in the library setting: however, disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Children nine to twelve, unless they are attending a program or using library resources in a productive manner, may not be at the library for longer than 2 to 3 hours.

Parents, guardians, or legal caregivers should not view the library as an alternative to long or short-term child care. Unlike a childcare facility, the library is not a closed environment. Staff cannot monitor everyone who enters, and all adult patrons are free to use any public area with in the library.

Child's Responsibilities

People who come to the library want to read, use the computer, and study.

So please

- Use your inside voice and maintain inside behavior
- Hands off regarding other patrons and their belongings

- Walk: don't run
- Take hiding, jumping, and running games outside the library
- Be patient and wait your turn
- No Bullying -respect other's individuality and personality

Staff Procedures for Unacceptable Behavior of Children

1. A staff member will advise the child to stop the disruptive behavior.
2. If the disruptive behavior continues, a staff member will inform the parent, guardian, or legal caregiver regarding the library's Children's Safety Policy.
3. A staff member will advise the child and his/her parent, guardian, or legal caregiver of future incidents of disruptive behavior which may result in eviction. Length of eviction is at the discretion of the library staff and Library Director.
4. If parent is not reachable or cannot pick up a disruptive child when there is concern the child's actions may cause harm to himself/herself or others, the police will be called to assess the situation.

At Closing

Staff Procedures

1. If a child twelve (12) and under is in the library at closing, the library staff will assist the child in calling a parent or legal guardian.
2. If the child has not been picked up by closing and if the parents have been contacted and are on their way, staff members will remain with the child up to fifteen minutes after closing time. After fifteen minutes, the child will be placed in the care of the Alva Police Department.
3. If the child has been picked up by the Alva Police Department, a staff member will post a note on the door advising the parent, guardian, or legal caregiver of the circumstances.

Children thirteen (13) and over will be asked to use the phones to contact a parent or guardian, but will be required to remain outside the library after closing. At the library staff's discretion, the police may be notified.

Disruptive Behavior at Children's Programs

1. Disruptive children will be asked to leave the program after one warning and escorted by a staff member out of the program area. If the child is a problem in the library area, the parents will be called and asked to come and pick him/her up.
2. Parents with children who are crying or engaging in other disruptive behaviors such as running, scuffling, and yelling will be asked to take their children away from the program area until the behavior can be corrected.
3. Day care groups or groups of children under the guidance of an adult who cannot control their children in the group will be contacted by the library staff. If this problem is not corrected, their group will be asked not to return until the problem is corrected.

The Alva Public Library reserves the right to take the appropriate action to ensure compliance with this policy. This policy is used in conjunction the library's Code of Conduct Policy.