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## UNATTENDED CHILDREN/SAFE CHILD POLICY

The Brewster Public Library welcomes children of all ages, and encourages children to use its facilities and services. Children under the age of 10 should always be accompanied by a parent/guardian or assigned caregiver. The assigned caregiver must be at least 16 years old and must carry emergency contact information. If a child is attending a library program, a parent or designated caregiver must remain in the building and be aware of the location and behavior of his/her child.

Children ages 10 -17 may use the library on their own provided that they comply with the Patron Code of Conduct and additional library policies. Parents/caregivers are still, however, responsible for the behavior of their children. If children do not comply with library policies, library staff may ask them to leave library property, and the police may be contacted. If a child of this age group is not able to leave the library without an adult, he/she should not be in the library alone. Children must also have the phone number of a parent/caregiver that may be contacted in an emergency. In addition, any damage caused by a child is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian, and will be subject to financial liability for damages.

The safety of children left alone in the library is a serious concern of the library staff. However, library staff cannot monitor the behavior and safety of children using the library. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with library personnel.

The library is not responsible for children without a ride home at closing. Library staff will exercise appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of unattended children when the library is closing. Parents/caregivers are responsible for being aware of the library's hours of operation, but must also keep in mind that the library may close unexpectedly for reasons out of the staff's control, such as a power outage, loss of heat, inclement weather, etc. Children should know what to do should this occur. Staff members are prohibited from providing transportation to any child. If no ride has arrived within 15 minutes after closing time, staff will call the Brewster Police Department. Two library staff members will wait for the police with the child. Staff will record the parent's/caregiver's name, address, telephone number and the child's name. Once found, the parent/caregiver will be given a copy of the Safe Child Policy. Staff will refer any additional incidents to the police department.

Violation of the Safe Child Policy may result in suspension of library privileges for the family.