



Library Safety Policy

The objective of the Library Safety Policy of Otis Library is to comply with the Standards of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and to maintain a safe and injury-free workplace for the employees and patrons of Otis Library.

Library security is everyone's job. Every staff person should be aware of what is happening around him or her and be prepared to step in when an issue needs addressing. Although Otis Library employs a Security Officer, safety is every employee's responsibility. This document is designed to help Library staff identify and address problematic behavior. Problematic behavior is any behavior that restricts or violates the rights of other patrons to enjoy the use of the Library and violates the Library's **Rules of Conduct** or posted rules.

When a violation of Library Rules of Conduct occurs staff will take action to resolve the situation. While good customer service skills or basic conflict resolution can solve most problems before they escalate, sometimes an issue arises that becomes complicated or even dangerous. To achieve the best possible outcome of a situation for both patrons and staff, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Call 911 immediately if the situation is violent or in any way threatening or if there is a need for emergency medical attention. (Note that children under 17 cannot refuse medical treatment.)
- Patrons exhibiting inappropriate behavior or violating the Library Rules of Conduct will be informed of the Library rules and told to comply. If the activity continues, a warning is given. If a further transgression occurs, they will be asked to leave the Library premises.
- If a patron remains on Library premises or re-enters after being notified by a staff member not to do so, the police must be called and the patron will be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespassing.
- An incident report must be filled out within twenty-four (24) hours and submitted to the Executive Director. The report should include the date of the

offense, names (if known), details of the offense, and the names of staff members involved.

The Executive Director or designee will review the situation and may ban the offending patrons from the Library for a specific period or indefinitely. The decision of the Executive Director or designee will be added to the incident report. The decision also will be posted to the staff Wiki and shared with the police department. The Executive Director may review or reconsider the decision upon the written request of the banned patron and may shorten or terminate the banning period if information submitted by the patron warrants such modification. The Executive Director will respond in writing and notify the patron if there is a reconsideration of the appeal process.

Copies of incident reports are shared with the Security Officer, police, and kept in the Administration Office. Reports are available for staff and police to review in case of repeat offenders. A current list of banned patrons is posted on the banned patron's list on the Shared Server.

Child Safety Policy

For this policy, a child is a person under the age of eighteen (18) years. This policy may also be applied to mentally challenged adults. Conditions may warrant the modification of the policy to fit particular or unique situations.

The safety of children alone in the Library is a serious concern for the Otis Library staff. The staff has many and varied duties to perform and cannot monitor the behavior and safety of children using the Library. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in Otis Library ultimately rests with the parent/caregiver, not the Library staff.

1. Children ages 11 and under must be supervised at all times by a parent or caregiver at least fifteen (15) years of age.
2. For children under age five (5) attending a Library program, a parent/caregiver must remain in the Children's Department.
3. For children age five (5) through eleven (11) attending a Library program conducted by a Library staff member, not by a volunteer, a parent or caregiver must remain in the Library but may move to a different floor, providing they inform the Children's Department staff where they will be located.
4. Children ages twelve (12) through age seventeen (17) may use the Library on their own, provided they comply with all Otis Library rules and the Library Rules of Conduct. Parents, caregivers, and guardians are still responsible for the behavior of their children. If children do not respect and comply with the Library rules or the Rules of Conduct, the staff may ask them to leave the Library and the police may be contacted.

If a child of this age group is not allowed to leave the library without an adult, (parent caregiver or guardian) he/she should not be left alone in the Library. The staff will follow the guidelines stated in this policy for children left unattended during open hours.

5. Parents/caregivers unaware of the Child Safety Policy will be given a copy of the policy and asked to comply.

Children Unattended During Operating Hours

Otis Library is not responsible for the care of unattended children. The Library is not intended or licensed to be a daycare, after-school facility, summer camp, or babysitting service.

If it is determined that a child under age 12 is lost or left unattended, a staff member will try to identify and locate the parent/caregiver according to the following procedures:

1. Children left unattended or who become lost are often frightened and crying and need reassurance from staff.
2. A staff member will walk around the public areas of the Library with the child, looking for a parent/caregiver or sibling. Often other patrons can provide information or assistance.
3. Staff will page the child's parent/caregiver using the child's name (if known). The page will be repeated as needed. The child will stay with staff in an area of the Library that is under video surveillance.
4. When the parent/caregiver is located, the Otis Library policy on unattended children will be shared with him/her.
5. If a parent /caregiver cannot be found in the building, a staff member will stay with the child until a parent/guardian/caregiver can be located through searching computer resources or checking with other patrons in the library to see if they have additional information.
6. If an attempt to locate the parent/caregiver is not successful, a staff member will call the police. Staff will explain carefully to the child that he or she is not in any trouble, the Library simply wants to make sure the child gets home safely.
7. Under no circumstances will any staff member take the child out of the building.
8. If necessary, the police may be contacted for an interpreter.

Children Unattended at Closing

A half-hour before closing time, Library staff will approach any unattended minors in the Library and determine whether they are accompanied by an adult or another responsible party. If unaccompanied, staff will question transportation

arrangements. If no definitive plans are in place, a phone call will be made to inform parents/caregivers that the child/children must be picked up by closing time. Two (2) staff members will remain with the child/children for up to twenty (20) minutes after closing time. After twenty (20) minutes, the child/children will be considered abandoned and the authorities called. **Library staff is not allowed or authorized to provide transportation to children left at closing.** Otis Library assumes no responsibility for children without a ride home at closing.

When waiting with a child, both staff and child must wait in an area that is under video surveillance.

Child Reported Lost

If a parent/caregiver reports a lost child, the staff will:

1. The responding staff member will obtain the child's name, age, and description. That staff member will phone the police at 911.
2. The responding staff member will enlist a second staff person to initiate a library-wide page to request staff assistance in locating the child and announce that the Library is in lockdown mode. The name and description of the child, including the clothing they are wearing, will be shared.
3. Staff will check the immediate outside vicinity of the Library to see if the child is outside the Library.
4. Staff will be posted at all exits, including fire exits, to monitor for the missing child. Additional staff will check the elevators. People attempting to exit the building will be asked to wait a few minutes as the Library is in lockdown. If a patron insists on leaving, he/she may be allowed to pass. However, a name, physical description, clothing, and other details that could aid in identifying them should be documented.
5. Other staff will immediately check all areas thoroughly, including bathrooms, offices, meeting rooms, and stairways. If the child is found before the police arrive, the non-emergency number, 860.886.5561, should be called to cancel the alert.

Basement Safety Policy

To ensure the safety and well-being of themselves, the public, and their fellow employees, all staff members are expected to follow the procedures as outlined in this section.

The first-floor door to the basement area is always locked. Admission to this area is by appointment with the Library Executive Director, designee, or staff whose offices are located in the basement. Visitors, volunteers, members of the Friends of Otis

Library (FOL) and the American Friends of Kenya (AFK) must sign in and out in the logbook kept near the Technical Services Department or, if accessing the basement from the first-floor visitors, the log available at the Front Desk. Volunteers must stay in their designated areas. Areas, where library materials are stored, are off-limits to non-staff members. Arrangements to view this material must be made directly with the Executive Director. The viewing or use of un-cataloged library materials is not permitted under any circumstances.

Staff should note the presence of city employees, technicians, and maintenance workers and report them to the Director or designee and the security officer. Children, unless designated as volunteers or accompanied by an adult, are not permitted in the basement.

Staff members with an office basement must receive a notification when someone other than staff has access to the basement. In the basement, the intercom system is only audible in the Library offices and the book sale area. Staff must be aware of individuals working in other basement areas

Volunteers and other designated individuals working in the basement may use the rear staff entrance. All volunteers must sign out when leaving the basement area.

The *Norwich Bulletin* archives and clipping files are not available to the public except under a controlled environment. Patrons must request a Bulletin volume at the Business Desk. Staff will bring the specified volumes for viewing to the Genealogy Room. Bound volumes of the *Norwich Bulletin* do not circulate. Requests to view elements of the clipping file are made with the Business Center staff, who may wish to consult with the Executive Director.

Volunteers working in the basement may bring in food or beverages, provided any refuse is removed by the volunteer on the same day. It is required that all empty boxes or other refuse be removed from the premises by the volunteer organizations using Library space.

The Library accepts no responsibility for loss of personal property or organization property being stored in the Library basement. Anything left is at the risk of the owner. No guarantee is made against loss by theft, fire, flood or any other disaster, natural or otherwise.

The service elevator is accessible by key to staff and volunteers for use in transporting library materials or donations between floors.

The door to the great room may be propped open when volunteers are working in the room. Volunteers should close the door and extinguish the lights when finished in the space.

Lost Property

Otis Library is not responsible for the security of personal items brought onto Library property. The staff and the public must secure personal property. Unclaimed items are managed according to the following guidelines:

- Found items will be held in a designated area at the Front Desk. Staff will date, initial, and note the location where the item was found.
- Reasonable attempts will be made to contact the owners (to the extent ownership is known) to reclaim their lost items.
- Perishable items such as food, baby bottles, beverage containers, and personal care items will be disposed of immediately.
- Library cards will be held in a box at the Front Desk, with a note added to the patron's account. Patrons will be notified of the card's location.
- Items will be stored for fourteen (14) days. After fourteen (14) days, certain types of property including unclaimed identification documents, driver's licenses, wallets, laptops, and cell phones will be forwarded to the Norwich Police Department. Credit cards will be shredded.
- After fourteen (14) days, unclaimed books will be given to the Friends of Otis Library for use in their book sales.
- After 14 days, items other than those described above will be discarded.