

UNATTENDED CHILDREN

FAC-12

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Policy Statement

Every effort is made to provide a safe, secure, comfortable, and convenient environment for all customers and staff. This is especially true for children who visit the library.

Definitions

Unattended Child: Any young person unaccompanied by a responsible adult who is unable to care for him or herself, or unable to use the library responsibly.

Responsible parent/caregiver: Refers to the parent, guardian, caregiver, or other person age 12 or older responsible for the welfare and behavior of the children for whom they are accountable.

Inappropriate behavior:

- Disruptive behavior, such as running, shouting, climbing, rude actions, horseplay, etc.
- Verbal or physical abuse of staff or other people in the library, such as cursing, demeaning comments, talking back, rude comments, hitting, biting, kicking, punching, teasing other children, hiding property etc.
- Damage to property of the library or others, such as breaking or ruining supplies, improper use of furniture or equipment, theft, etc.

Guidelines

The singular term “child” is used in often used in this policy; however, the policy is equally applied to multiple children in the care of a responsible adult.

Regulations

The library is not responsible for unattended children. Staff may refer children who are left unattended to the appropriate authorities including police or child welfare agencies.

1. Child care services (temporary or permanent) are not provided by the library or its staff. If it is believed this is the case, the responsible parent/caregiver will be contacted by phone and asked to pick up the child immediately.
2. Children aged three (3) and younger must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times. Children aged three to nine (3-9) must be accompanied and supervised by a responsible parent/caregiver who must remain in the library while the child is present.
3. Children ages nine (9) and younger attending age-appropriate library events or classes may be left at the library, with the understanding that a responsible parent/caregiver will return to the library by the conclusion of the event.
4. Children aged nine (9) and younger who arrive at the library without a responsible parent/caregiver will be asked to leave the building and return with an adult. If a child is not able to leave the library without an adult, he/she should not be in the library alone.

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5. The responsible parent/caregiver for a child under age nine (9) is accountable for assisting the child in displaying appropriate behaviors while in the library and abiding by library rules.
 - a. Young people age 9 or older found displaying inappropriate behaviors will be spoken to by library staff. If the behavior continues or is deemed severe from the start, the child may be asked to leave the library.
 - b. Younger children must be dealt with by the responsible parent/caregiver present in the library at the time of the behavior. If staff feels the situation has not been brought under control or the behavior continues, the child and adult may be asked to leave the library.
6. Children dependent on a parent/caregiver for transportation home must be picked up before the library closes. Parents/caregivers responsible for such children must be aware of closing times and make arrangements to meet children promptly. If an adult cannot be reached to retrieve the child within 10 minutes of closing time, staff will call the police who will assume responsibility for the unattended child.
7. All children should know how to reach a responsible parent/caregiver at all times. The library phone may be used for children to reach adults or in case of an emergency.
8. In the case of an emergency closing, staff will assist children in contacting responsible parent/caregiver to pick them up. If someone cannot be reached within 10 minutes, staff will call the police who will assume responsibility for the unattended child. Parents/caregivers should be aware of circumstances for unexpected closings of the library (storms, power outages, etc.). Emergency closings are announced as soon as possible.

Library staff may not transport any child from the library to another location.