

Unattended Children Policy

1. The Springfield Memorial Library is a community information resource center. People come into the library to get information, to read, use the library's resource materials, and to study. It belongs to the whole community, and not to any specific person or group of persons.
2. The library is not a playground, recreation center, day-care facility, or baby-sitting service. Noisy or physically active behavior appropriate in such facilities is not appropriate in the library.
3. Section 51-212 of the Nebraska Statutes specifically gives public libraries the power to regulate the use of the library to exclude from the library, persons who violate or refuse to comply with the library's rules and regulations.
4. In order to prevent undue disruption of normal library activities, to provide for the general welfare of all persons using the library, to provide for the general safety of children using the Springfield Memorial Library, and to guide staff in dealing with unattended children, the following policies are adopted:

Purpose:

The care and behavior of minor children visiting the Springfield Memorial Library are the responsibility of the parent / guardian. The library does not act in loco parentis. While many people think of a public library as a safe environment, this is unfortunately not always the case. Library staff welcomes minor children to enjoy the library and library materials, but cannot accept responsibility for their safety and supervision.

Policy:

All children eight (8) years of age or younger shall, at all times, be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult or caregiver, age sixteen (16) or older. Children eight (8) years of age or younger may be left unattended at scheduled library programs; however, the responsible adult or caregiver shall notify library staff of the child's attendance and plan to be at the library when the program concludes. Children with special needs related to physical or mental ability shall be attended by their responsible adult or caregiver at all times. Children nine (9) years of age or older may use the library unattended, subject to the rules and regulations of the library. The library does not assume responsibility for any child left unattended on the library premises.

Procedure:

Unattended Children Eight (8) Years of Age or Younger:

If a child eight (8) or younger is found without a parent or caregiver, staff will attempt to locate them and will stay with the child until the parent or caregiver is found. If a parent or caregiver cannot be located within thirty (30) minutes or if the library is closing, library staff will contact the Sarpy County Sheriff's Department. A library staff member will remain with the child on the library premises until law enforcement arrives. If the parent or caregiver arrives prior to law enforcement arrival, library staff will notify law enforcement that they are no longer needed. Use of the library and its services may be denied for violation of this policy.

Children Nine (9) Years of Age or Older:

Unattended children (9) Years of age or older are welcome to use the library's resources as long as needed, provided they follow the rules and regulations of the library. Children who use the library independently must have definite arrangements to be picked up by closing time. If a parent or caregiver does not pick up a child by closing time and cannot be located, library staff will contact the Sarpy County

Sheriff's Department. A library staff member will remain with the child on library premises until law enforcement arrives. If the parent or caregiver arrives prior to law enforcement arrival, library staff will notify law enforcement that they are no longer needed. Use of the library and its services may be denied for violation of this policy.

If calling a parent / caregiver: Hello, this is _____ at the Springfield Memorial Library. (Name of Child) is here without supervision of a responsible adult or caregiver. Since he/she is under the age of nine (9) and is unable to conduct himself/herself independently in the library, you will need to come to the library to get him/her. If you are unable to do that within thirty (30) minutes/or prior to library closing, our staff is authorized to contact law enforcement.

If calling law enforcement: Hello, this is _____ at the Springfield Memorial Library. We have a child, age (child's age), who is at the library without supervision and we have been unable to contact a parent or caregiver to come to the library for the child. *Provide any additional information the dispatcher may request.*

Parent/Guardian Signature_____