



# UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY

A primary mission of the library is to provide a safe, secure, comfortable and convenient facility for patrons and staff. This is especially true for children who visit the library. Although staff is available to assist and provide general guidance, **the library does not provide childcare services**. Attaining the desired and appropriate environment for children requires the communication and cooperation of both staff and parents.

## DEFINITIONS

An unattended child is any young person unaccompanied by a responsible adult and who is unable to care for his or her self, or use the library responsibly.

An adult is a patron who is 18 years or older.

## INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Examples of inappropriate behavior may include but are not limited to:

- *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.*

## REGULATIONS

Parents or adult caregivers are legally responsible for the welfare and behavior of their children. The library is not responsible for unattended children. Library staff may refer children who are left unattended in the library to appropriate authorities including the police or child welfare agencies.

1. Young children may not be left unattended. Children up to age eight and under must have a parent/caregiver, age 18 or older, in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child.
2. Older children, ages nine and up, may need adult supervision to ensure their safety and to maintain appropriate behavior and responsible library use. Staff members will use their judgment and discretion in determining whether or not an unattended child needs a parent or caregiver to provide supervision.
3. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Staff will ask children to comply with library rules or instructions. Children whose behavior is disruptive to library rules and instructions will be asked to leave the library grounds. If a child is not able to leave the library without an adult, he/she should not be in the library alone. Children will be given the opportunity to make a phone call to a parent or guardian to inform them of the circumstances. Staff is not permitted to remain after hours with an unattended child nor give him/her a ride home. A parent or the police may be called to pick up the child.
4. Children should know how to reach an adult at all times. They may use the library business phone in case of an emergency.
5. Parents should be aware of circumstances for unexpected closings of the library (storms, power outages, etc.). Library hours of operation are posted on signs and handouts.

*Approved November 10, 2011*

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