



## Fairview Public Library Unattended Children Policy

Children are always welcome at Fairview Public Library. It is a wonderful place for them to experience the excitement of reading and the pleasure of sharing good books.

Library staff members strive to ensure that the facility is operated in a safe manner. However, because the building is open to the public, the library should not be considered a safe place for unattended children. The responsibility for the safety and behavior, and supervision of children in the library rests with the parents, legal guardians, or other responsible adult caregivers. Library staff members are not responsible for the care and safety of unattended children in the library. Fairview Public Library assumes no responsibility for unattended children under the age of 18.

- All children under the age of **11 (eleven)** must be supervised by a parent, guardian or other responsible adult in such a manner to maintain that child's positive behavior and for the safety of the child.
- Children aged 11 or older may use the library without a parent or responsible adult caregiver present, but must be able to reach a responsible adult immediately. All children must abide by the Code of Conduct and all library policies and procedures while in the library. Children who do not follow the Code of Conduct are subject to the same consequences as other library users, including being required to leave the library or losing library privileges.
- In order to maintain a safe environment for children in the Children's Room, adults who are not accompanying a child or using the children's collection for legitimate purposes may be questioned by staff and asked to move to another area of the library. Failure to comply with a staff member's direction may result in intervention by law enforcement.
- Children of any age may not be left at the library for childcare or babysitting purposes.

Parents should be aware of the Library's hours and keep in mind that those hours may change due to holiday schedules, inclement weather, or other unforeseen emergencies. Parents must make contingency plans for the child's immediate pick-up due to unexpected closings. To avoid having your child become anxious or frightened, please inform him/her of your whereabouts and how to contact you in an emergency.

Teachers, daycare providers, or other youth leaders may not leave groups of unattended students in the library, regardless of the age of the students.

Library staff members will be guided by this policy in situations such as:

- An unattended child is found frightened or crying in the Library

- An unattended child is perceived to be endangering him or herself
- Another person in the Library poses a perceived threat to an unattended child

An unattended child exhibits inappropriate behavior. Such behavior includes but is not limited to:

- Using profanity or other language that is abusive to other patrons or employees
- Abusing library furniture, equipment, or materials
- Fighting on library property
- Running in a library building
- Using the emergency exits at times other than during an emergency

After evaluating the situation, Library staff members will attempt to contact the parent or legal guardian of the unattended child. In the event that the parent or legal guardian cannot be contacted within 30 minutes, local law enforcement officials may be called.

#### Unattended Child Procedure

The procedures outlined below are to serve as guidelines. Every situation will be unique, so use your best judgment, exercising courtesy and common sense.

- 10 - 15 minutes before closing, library staff should look for unattended children.
- Library staff shall inform any unattended children of our closing time and ask if they need to use the phone to call for a ride. If necessary, they will be allowed to use one of the public desk phones.
- If the parents of the child(ren) are not available or there is an unreasonable wait time (more than 30 minutes), library staff shall call the police.
- Before telephoning the police, library staff should get as much information as possible from the child, including their name, age, phone number and parent's name.
- Under no circumstances will a staff member stay alone with a child after closing time or take a child from the premises.
- If a child remains after closing time at a time when only a single staff member is working, the staff member may either
  - a. Ask a patron to remain with the staff member and unattended child until arrival of the parent
  - b. Have the child await the parent's arrival outside the front door and monitor them via the security feed.
  - c. Wait outside with the child on either porch as long as they are in view of those passing by
- Library staff shall fill out an Incident Report form if the police have been called, as well as briefly inform other library staff about the situation.
- Library staff should notify the Director of any child(ren) left after closing.