

William B. Ogden Free Library
UNATTENDED CHILD

Purpose

The library has a responsibility to provide an environment that is safe and comfortable for every patron who is using its services and facilities. The Board of Trustees and staff are eager for children to use the library and welcomes those who do so. However, the library cannot be held responsible for incidents, accidents, or other liabilities arising from the actions of unattended children.

The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver. Children who are unable to abide by the library's Patron Code of Conduct should not be in the library unattended.-

Definitions

An unattended child is defined as:

- A child under the age of ten (10) who is not accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, custodian or caregiver age sixteen (16) or older;
- A child between the ages of ten (10) and (16) who is using the library independently, but is not following the Patron Code of Conduct and/or is not picked up by closing time and needs assistance procuring transportation.

Policy

The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of children.

- If a child under the age of ten (10) is found to be unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver and inform them of the Unattended Child policy. If the parent/caregiver cannot be located, library staff will contact law enforcement to assist the child.
- Children under the age of ten (10) years old must be accompanied by a caregiver over the age of sixteen (16).- The caregiver is responsible for the behavior and direct supervision of children in their care while at the library.
- Parents/caregivers are required to attend all library story times and programs with children under the age of eight (8) years. Children between the ages of 8-10 may attend youth service programs without a parent/caregiver. However, the parent/caregiver must be ready to meet those children promptly when a program ends. Staff does not monitor the arrival or departure of any child from a program or the building and cannot report on their whereabouts.
- Children ages ten (10) and up who can understand and follow the Patron Code of Conduct and who can care for themselves, are welcome to be in the library unattended

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- Children ages ten (10) and up who need help from staff beyond assistance with normal library services should not be left in the library without a responsible caregiver. Staff cannot be expected to monitor or prevent children ages ten (10) and up from leaving the building/grounds or to assume responsibility for monitoring their behavior.
- Staff will attempt to contact a parent/guardian or caregiver when a child's health or safety is in doubt, their behavior disturbs other library users, their actions violate any of the library's Patron Code of Conduct, or if the parent/guardian or caregiver is not present at closing time. If the parent/guardian or caregiver cannot be located, library staff will contact law enforcement to assist the child. A staff member will remain with the child until law enforcement arrives. If law enforcement has been called for assistance at closing time, two staff members must wait with the child until they arrive.
- Library staff may not transport children to any location, even by request of the parent/caregiver.

Follow Up

In any situation involving the safety of children, and specifically whenever the parent/caregiver or police are contacted, staff will complete an Incident Report. If an incident report is filed, a letter will be sent by the Library Director directly to caregivers stressing the library's concern for the safety of unattended children and the importance of developing alternative care options.

Adopted March 2016
Revised November 2019
Reviewed & Revised August 2023