

Unattended Children and Youth Safety

1. Responsibility

1.1. The Library strives to make its environment welcoming and accessible to children and as safe as possible. However, staff are not able to supervise unattended children.

1.2. The Library is not responsible for unattended children.

1.3. It is the Library's policy to report suspected neglect or abuse. Library employees who know or have reasonable cause to believe a youth is neglected or abused shall immediately, at minimum, create a written report to be filed.

1.4. Library privileges may be curtailed when an unattended youth is repeatedly left in the Library's care after closing.

2. Definitions

2.1. For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

2.1.1. A "child" is considered to be anyone who is 8 years of age or younger.

2.1.2. A "youth" is considered to be anyone who is 17 years of age or younger.

2.1.3. A youth is considered to be "unattended" when a caregiver cannot be located or contacted.

2.1.4. A "disruptive" child is one whose actions disturb others, damage items belonging to the Library or to others, or is unable to be redirected by the youth's caregiver.

2.1.5. A "caregiver" must be at least 14 years of age.

3. Disruptive Behavior, Neglect, or Abuse

3.1. If a youth is disruptive:

3.1.1. Library staff will communicate with the youth's caretaker or the contact person indicated on the youth's application card.

3.1.2. If the caretaker cannot be found or the contact person cannot be reached, the staff will call the police department to report cases of unattended or disruptive youth.

4. Unattended Youths

4.1. Children 8 years of age or younger

4.1.1. The library requires that caregivers of children 8 years of age or younger stay within line of sight of the child.

4.1.2. Caregivers may not leave children 8 years of age or younger unattended in the children's areas while using other areas of the library.

4.2. Youths aged 9 through 17 years of age

4.2.1. May use the library unattended for any length of time as long as the youth's conduct is acceptable in a library setting and general conduct rules are observed (See Behavior Policy).

4.3. People of any age with special needs which require supervision necessary, shall be accompanied by a caregiver.

5. Library Response to Youth Left Unattended

5.1. If a child is found without a parent or caregiver, the staff will:

5.1.1. Attempt to comfort the child, if necessary.

5.1.2. Locate the parent or caregiver in the Library and explain the Youth Safety Policy.

5.1.3. Make every effort to contact the parent or caregiver who is not in the Library to come and pick up the child.

5.1.4. If the parent or caregiver cannot be located within 30 minutes, staff will contact local law enforcement.

5.2. If a youth is left at the Library after closing:

5.2.1. For youth under the age of 17

- Two staff members will remain with the youth while attempting to locate the youth's parent or caregiver.
- If the parent or caregiver cannot be reached, law enforcement officials will be called.
- Staff will leave when directed by law enforcement.

5.2.3. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES will library staff transport or take youth away from the library building.