

Unattended Children Policy

The Preble County District Library wants children to use its facilities and services.

The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern of the library staff. **The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with the library personnel.** Library staff members have many duties and cannot supervise children nor act as a substitute for daycare. Library employees cannot be responsible for children who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior.

The library expects the adult to **set reasonable time limits** for their children's library visits. When young children are left alone, they may become frightened or anxious. If they wander through the building they may encounter hazards such as stairs, doors, furniture or electrical equipment. They may also become bored and restless and could disturb the enjoyment and work of others.

Children shall be considered "attended" as long as they are **within sight** of the parent or responsible person. An exception would be children attending a story time or other library program without a parent/responsible person in the room. However, the parent/responsible person must remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

Children 8 years or younger should always be accompanied by a parent and/or responsible person in the library. If a child 8 years or younger is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library and inform him/her of the rules. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended again, the police will be called for assistance.

Teenagers are treated as adult users. However, they are still legally the responsibility of their parents.

Closing Time: If a child is left unattended in the Library at closing, the staff will attempt to locate his/her parents/caregiver. The Library staff **will** contact law enforcement personnel if staff is unable to reach parents or other caregivers by telephone. Staff will fill out an incident report. Staff will not leave a child outside to wait for a ride nor drive children home.

The Library Code of Conduct applies to all patrons. When a child violates the Code of Conduct, both the child and the parent/caregiver will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child and attending adult/caregiver may be asked to leave the library.

Repeat offenders of the Library's Unattended Children Policy will be sent a letter informing them future violations of the Library's policy will necessitate contacting the Department of Children Services.

Adopted 2007