

Unattended/Disruptive Children Policy

The Salem City Library aims to provide a safe, secure, and comfortable environment for patrons and staff. The library encourages children to use its facilities and services when they visit. Although staff is available to assist and provide general guidance, the library does not provide childcare services. The library assumes no responsibility for the care and supervision of children or their behavior.

Parents or adult caregivers are legally responsible for the welfare and behavior of their children. Library staff may refer children who are left unattended in the library to appropriate authorities including the police or child welfare agencies.

- Young children may not be left unattended. Children up to age nine and under must have a parent/caregiver aged sixteen or older, in the vicinity of the child.
- Older children, ages ten 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 to determine whether or not an unattended child needs a parent or caregiver to provide supervision.

Disruptive behavior is any behavior within the library that infringes on the rights of others using the library. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Library staff will approach disruptive children in the following manner:

- Give a verbal warning to the child indicating that such behavior is disruptive to other library users and is unacceptable.
- If the disruptive behavior continues, approach the parent/caregiver with the same warning; if the child is unattended, give the child a second warning.
- If the disruptive behavior continues, request the parent/caregiver escort the child from the library premises. Unattended disruptive children, older than eight years may be asked to leave the library after one warning. In such instances, parents will be contacted or, if the parent is unavailable, police assistance can be utilized.

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 our website.

Children should know how to reach an adult at all times. They may use the library business phone in case of an emergency.

- The staff will encourage an unattended child to contact their parent/caregiver if it is within 15 minutes of closing. The child will be asked to wait outside the library after closing.
- Library staff will not remain after hours with an unattended child and are not permitted, under any circumstances, to give him/her a ride home.
- The library is not responsible for children outside the building who await transportation or who are socializing.