

SAFE CHILD POLICY

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions will be used:

Unattended Children

- Under 9 years old and unaccompanied by a parent, guardian, or other caregivers
- Under 9 years old and on a different floor of the Library from a parent, guardian, or other caregivers
- Under 9 years old and being "supervised" by someone under 14 years old

Caregiver

- Any individual at least 14 years of age who is responsible for a child

Introduction

The Trustees and Staff of the Reading Public Library strive to create a warm, inviting, fun, and safe environment for children. The Library offers programs and services that encourage frequent visits by children, families, and caregivers to help develop a love of books, reading, and learning. However, library staff cannot provide childcare or assume responsibility for children's safety. Parents, teachers, and caregivers are responsible for the behavior and safety of children visiting the Library. Staff cannot be placed in the position of supervising unattended children.

Safe Child Policy

The following rules have been established regarding unattended children because we care about the safety of all our patrons:

1. Children under the age of 9 must be accompanied and adequately supervised by a parent or caregiver while in the Library.
2. Children ages 9 to 11 should not be left unattended for longer than two hours at a time.
3. Children ages 9 and above should have the telephone number of their parent, caregiver, or other designated adult available in the event of an emergency or unexpected closing.
4. Parents or caregivers are responsible for picking up children by the time the Library closes. Both children and adults need to be aware of library hours.
5. Should it be determined that a child under age 14 has been left at the Library at closing time, every attempt will be made to contact the child's parents or caregiver. The Reading Police will be called if no one can be reached.
6. Staff members will remain with an unattended child after hours until the parent, caregiver, or Police arrive. The Reading Police will call the child's home first and leave a message indicating that the officer will pick the child up at the Library and bring them to the Police Station.

7. Staff members must fill out an incident report form and leave it for the Director when the Police are called.
8. Library staff members will not transport children from the Library to any other location.
9. Patrons who violate these rules risk having their library privileges restricted or revoked.

Appropriate Use of Youth Spaces

The Children's Room and any other designated children's space are reserved for use by children birth to 12 The Teen Room and any other designated teen space are reserved for youth aged 12-18 or in grades 6-12. Parents, caregivers, teachers, and adults are permitted in these spaces when accompanying a youth or actively using or searching the collections.

Children and Teen programs and events are an extension of these youth spaces, and thus this policy applies. Adults without a child or teen will not be allowed to attend youth events without permission from the Reading Public Library staff.

The Children's restroom is for the exclusive use of children and their caregivers.

Adopted: June 2003
Revised: September 2019