

Adopted: 12/05/2005

Reviewed and/or Revised: 12/2007, 02/04/2019, 06/05/2023

Children are always welcome and encouraged to visit the Robert W. Barlow Memorial Library. We want the library to be a welcoming and safe place for children; however, our staff members have many duties to perform in order to serve all patrons in the best way possible. The library is a busy public place, open to all, and staff cannot judge which members of the public present a possible danger to children. Library staff cannot assume responsibility for unattended, disruptive or abandoned children of any age.

Policy

Children age eight (8) or younger must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or responsible caregiver.

The parent/guardian or responsible caregiver must remain in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child. For this policy, a responsible caregiver would be considered a competent person **13 years of age** or older. Library staff may use discretion in determining a youth's ability to control and supervise children age eight (8) and under.

During library programs the parent/caregiver is expected to remain in the library during the program and immediately join the child (8 and under) at the end of the program. If a parent/caretaker leaves the building he/she should sign-out at the front desk or with the library personnel leading the program, leaving a name and phone number of where he/she may be reached in an emergency. He/she will need to return in time to join the child after the program.

Children age 9 and older may use the library unattended, subject to the rules and regulations that apply to all library patrons as outlined under "Conduct in the Library".

Occasionally the library may need to close without advance notice as a result of an emergency such as bad weather. Children should be advised about what action the parent/caregiver wishes them to take in the event of an unexpected library closure. During a weather warning, such as a tornado warning, children 17 and under will not be allowed to leave the library and will be directed to the shelter site until the warning is over.

Parents who disregard library policy may lose all library privileges, and if necessary, may be reported to the appropriate social services agency.

When made aware of an unattended child, Library staff will make a reasonable attempt to locate the parent/guardian or responsible caregiver. If a parent/guardian is not located, the unattended child will be notified of the age requirements and will be given a copy of the Child Safety Policy to be given to their parent/guardian. The child will be allowed to remain in the library for the remainder of their visit. If the parent/guardian or responsible caregiver is not located or does not retrieve the unattended child at closing time, the police may be notified.