

Unattended Children Policy

The Barrington Public Library strives to provide a safe, comfortable environment to serve the current informational, recreational, intellectual and cultural needs of users of all ages. All library users, regardless of age must conduct themselves lawfully, follow the library's Appropriate Library Behavior Policy and be considerate of others. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of unattended children in our facility. In order to do so, the following guidelines have been established.

1) No child under the age of 6 may be left unattended in the Barrington Public Library.

- Children under age 6 must be attended by an adult at all times (this means the child is within the parent's sight), including while they are in the children's room, accessing the collection, visiting the bathrooms, or in the computer room.

2) Children between the ages of 6 and 9 who are engaged in a library-sponsored program may be left unattended for the duration of the program only.

- Parent/caregiver should be aware of the duration of the program, remain in the library, and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

3) Children aged 10 and up may be left unattended, at the discretion of their parent/guardian.

- Children may be left alone for a period of time deemed necessary to research an assignment, complete a homework task, attend a program, or to select books and read in the library.
- Children will be expected to display appropriate behavior conducive to maintaining a peaceful atmosphere in the building for all patrons.
- Both parents and children should be aware that the library cannot be used as an alternative to after-school care, and that the library does not provide supervision to children left unattended. If the adult feels it is unsafe for the child to leave the building without adult supervision, the child should not be in the library unattended.
- Even in their absence, parents or guardians are responsible for the conduct and safety of their children on library premises. Children are expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct as adults.
- Children who are not using the library appropriately or who require excessive staff attention will have a parent or guardian called to pick them up immediately. If a child is asked to leave the library, they will not be allowed to come back to the library without adult supervision until a parent or guardian has talked with the library director, and the parent and child have signed and returned a copy of the library's Appropriate Behavior Policy.
- Library employees are not licensed care providers and cannot take the place of parents or guardians in monitoring the safety or behavior of children.
- Children left unattended should know how to reach a parent or guardian. Parents should be aware of the closing time of the library and arrive prior to that time for pick up.

4) Children must leave the library at closing time.

- Children left to wait outside for a ride after the library closes are placed in a vulnerable position. For his or her own safety, any child left unattended after hours will not be left to wait outside the building alone. A parent or guardian will be called to pick up the child, and a fee of \$25 per hour will be assessed to cover two staff members to supervise the child. (This fee will only be assessed after a parent has been given this policy, and second incident occurs). Should a parent be unable to come and get the child within 1 hour, the Barrington police will be called to take protective custody of the child.
- In any situation involving the safety of children, and specifically whenever the parent/caregiver or police are contacted, staff will complete an Incident Report within 24 hours to be submitted to and kept on file with the Library Director.
- Under no circumstances will a member of the library staff take a child away from the building or transport children to another location unless written parental permission is previously given (i.e. for a library field trip).

Parents or guardians who have a grievance with the public library concerning this policy must inform the Library Director in writing within 30 days. They will be scheduled to attend the next Board of Trustees meeting to discuss their grievance.