

Charlton Public Library Unattended Children Policy

The staff of the Charlton Public Library strive to create a warm, inviting, fun environment for children. The Library offers programs and services that encourage children to develop a love of books, reading, and learning. However, the safety and well-being of children at the Library is of serious concern. Our building is large with numerous rooms, staircases and exits; many of these are out of sight or earshot of Library staff. It is the intention of this policy to enlist the cooperation of parents and other adults responsible for children to ensure that the Charlton Public Library can provide a safe and pleasant experience for all who use it.

The Charlton Public Library is not responsible for the well being of children who are left unattended in the Library. The Library staff is here strictly to help you and your children with Library needs. The staff is not licensed to perform child care.

Children aged 10 years and under should be continually accompanied by a parent or guardian. Parents/guardians should be aware that the Library is a public building and is no safer than any other public place or building. Because the Children's Room is on a separate level, the same policy applies to children left unattended downstairs while parents/guardians go upstairs to the Adult collection or any other area of the Library. Children over the age of 5 who are attending Library programs that do not require parent/guardian accompaniment are supervised by Library staff only during the scheduled time of the program and only while in the Story Time Room (or room in which the program is being held). Staff is not responsible for children who leave the program room. Parents/guardians may not leave the building during this type of program. The Charlton Public Library reserves the right to ask a patron of any age to leave the building if he/she is acting in an inappropriate manner, creating a public nuisance, or inhibiting the rights and privileges of others. Parents assume all liability for damage done by their children to any Library property.

Children who are left unattended at the Charlton Public Library should know how to get in touch with a parent/guardian. Parents/guardians are reminded that numerous unexpected events may occur in which the Library could close without notice, therefore stranding an unattended child. Staff members are not permitted to remain after the Library closes with an unattended child (unless waiting for the police) nor are they permitted to give a child a ride home. If at closing time an adult family member/guardian of the child cannot be reached, the Charlton Police will be called to escort the child home or keep the child until parents/guardians can be reached. Two staff members will remain with the child until the police have arrived. As a follow-up procedure, the Youth Services Librarian will attempt to contact the child's parent/guardian to explain the Library policy and why the action was required.

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees on March 20, 2008

Reviewed and accepted by the Library Board of Trustees on March 21, 2023