

Unattended Children in the Library

The policy of the Ventress Memorial Library is that the responsibility for children using the library rests with the parent or with the child's caregiver, not with library personnel. Library staff does not take the place of a parent, act as a babysitter, or assume responsibility for unsupervised children.

We invite children to use the library and hope that they perceive the library as a warm, inviting, and fun place to be. The services provided are aimed at encouraging children to develop a love of books, learning, and libraries in general.

The following policy on unattended children is not intended to restrict library service to children. The policy was adopted to ensure the general safety and well-being of all children who use the library.

Guidelines for implementing policy:

1. Children 10 and under shall be supervised at all times by a responsible person (defined as an adult or a teenager age 14+ who has responsibility for the child).
2. Children 11 and older who use the library unsupervised are subject to the same rules and regulations governing behavior and use of the facility as adults. The child must be able to behave appropriately while unsupervised.
3. A child left unsupervised who becomes anxious may be reassured by a staff member. The person responsible for the child should be located and the need for his/her presence should be explained.
4. Children using the library unsupervised who have become disruptive will be asked to stop the behavior. If the behavior continues after a second warning, the child may be asked to leave the library.
5. Anyone under the age of 18 left unattended 15 minutes before closing time should be reminded of the time and asked if they need to call for a ride.
6. If anyone under 18 is left unattended at the close of business hours, two staff members will remain with them after calling the Marshfield Police to come to the library and monitor the patron. Staff may leave when the police arrive.

Definition of Proper Behavior

Proper behavior includes doing homework, writing reports, researching, browsing for books, thinking or daydreaming, reading, quiet conversation, attending programs, volunteering, and using the computers.

Definition of Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior includes that which represents physical danger to the child or others, or may serve to interfere with legitimate library business by other patrons or staff. Disruptive behavior is behavior that would be considered inappropriate in a setting where business is being conducted.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees November 7, 2007