

Unattended Children Policy

The Liberal Memorial Staff hopes that the children who use our library will perceive our facility as warm, inviting, and a fun place to be. Many programs are offered to make the library enticing to children and to help children enjoy their visits and develop a love for books, reading, and libraries.

However, when children are left unattended for several hours when no library programs are being offered, they often become bored and disruptive. Each year in the United States, over 50,000 children are abducted and never found. Young children are not safe when left unattended in the library. The staff cannot know if children are leaving the building with parents or with strangers. For the protection and well-being of children who enjoy our library, the following policy has been established.

POLICY: Parents (or responsible adults or care givers) are responsible for the behavior of their children while in the library and may not leave children under the age of eight unattended.

UNATTENDED CHILDREN

1. Staff should comfort frightened or crying unattended children.
2. Lost or frightened unattended children should be brought to the Children's Librarian or to the circulation desk where the staff will make every effort to locate the parents in the library. Under no circumstance will the members of the staff transport the child to another location. The police may be called at the discretion of the staff if the parent is not found.
1. Children eight and over may be left unattended for a maximum of two hours unless attending a scheduled library program. However, it is not recommended that children in elementary School be left unattended, even if they are over the age of eight. Junior High and High School Students may stay for an indefinite period as long as they are not being disruptive.
2. Children attending programs are supervised by the library staff and for the purposes of this policy are considered attended.
5. Children seven and under may not be left with brothers and sisters sixteen and younger.

DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN

DISRUPTIVE ATTENDED CHILDREN

1. Staff will ask children who are being disruptive to behave, or they may suggest alternative activities. If the disruptive behavior continues the staff will inform the parents that their children are disturbing others.
2. The family will be asked to leave if parents refuse or are unable to control their children.

DISRUPTIVE UNATTENDED CHILDREN

1. Staff will ask children who are being disruptive to behave, or they may suggest alternative activities.
2. If disruptive behavior continues the children will be told to sit quietly until the parents are located. If parents are located they will be advised to pick up their children immediately.
3. If the parents cannot be located the children will be confined to an area near the desk of the Children's Librarian or by the circulation desk. The parent will be told of the child's disruptive behavior.
4. If the parents cannot be contacted within an hour the police may be called at the discretion of the staff.

UNATTENDED CHILDREN AT CLOSING TIME

1. Thirty minutes before closing time the staff shall urge all unattended children to call their parents. If the parents cannot be located by closing time, the police may be called at the discretion of the staff.
2. If the parents have been contacted and are on their way, a staff member will remain with the children until the parents have arrived.