



Unattended Child Policy

The Bergenfield Public Library is committed to providing a welcoming and safe environment for children of all ages. Service to children is an important part of the Library's mission.

The well-being and safety of children and dependent persons (individuals of any age who are unable to make decisions about their own safety and well-being) can be of serious concern. The Library is a public building open to all individuals. It is not the Library staff's function or purpose to provide supervision or to care for children or dependent persons while parents, guardians or caregivers are unavailable.

The Library staff is not authorized to act in place of parents, guardians or caregivers. Staff members are responsible for assisting all Library customers and cannot adequately monitor unattended children.

Responsibility for the safety and behavior of minor children and dependent persons in the Library rests with the parent, guardian or caregiver, not with the staff. Parents or caregivers should not expect that staff can meet the specific needs of their child or dependent person nor expect that staff will know if a child or dependent person is leaving the building with parents or strangers.

For the protection of children and dependent persons who visit the Library, the following policy has been instituted:

1. Elementary school age children (Kindergarten-Grade 5) and younger must be accompanied by an adult or a responsible, mature caregiver when visiting the Library. Children under the age of six (6) years must be within eyesight of a parent, guardian or responsible, mature caregiver and supervised at all times in all parts of the Library building and on Library grounds. Running, pushing, shouting, rowdy activities and playing in the Library is prohibited and should be stopped at once.
2. Children under the age of 10 years must be accompanied by an adult or responsible, mature caregiver on the elevator.
3. All patrons, including unattended minors using the Library alone or independent of parental supervision, are subject to the Library's Code of Conduct set forth in the Library Conduct policy. If the behavior of a patron of any age is in violation of this policy, Library staff may ask the patron to leave the Library and Library privileges may be suspended or revoked. Discipline problems are so varied that each situation will be handled as it occurs.
4. If unattended children age twelve (12) years and under remain at the Library at closing time, staff will attempt to contact parents but may not and will not assume responsibility to care for or transport the child. **Staff members are not permitted to take the child out of the building or to transport the child to another location.** If staff cannot reach the parent or guardian within Unattended Child Policy, Adopted April 14, 2011 fifteen (15) minutes of closing, the Person In Charge will call the police. Two staff members will remain with the child until suitable arrangements are made with the police, parent or guardian.
5. Any child or dependent person who is not able to leave the Library without an adult, should not be in the Library unaccompanied by a parent, guardian or responsible, mature caregiver.
6. Action regarding an unattended or neglected child under age twelve (12) years or unattended dependent person, including contacting the police, social services, or another agency, will be taken when his/her health or safety become an issue or there is disruptive behavior that is caused by or affects the child or dependent person in question or other Library patrons.

Unattended Child Policy, Adopted April 14, 2011