

UNATTENDED CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY POLICY*

**APPROVED BY
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
THE COAL CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT**

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**REVIEWED
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***DENOTES LEGAL LANGUAGE**

**COAL CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
UNATTENDED CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY POLICY***

The Coal City Public Library welcomes and encourages the use of its services and facilities by children. Staff members are committed to helping children find materials which meet their needs, providing a welcoming environment, and planning and presenting programs that enrich, inform and entertain. However, any public place may be dangerous for a child who is left unattended for even brief periods of time.

To help ensure the safety and comfort of children using the Library and to maintain an atmosphere conducive to reading and study, the Board of Trustees of the Library has adopted the following guidelines:

- Parents or legal guardians are responsible for their children's safety, well-being and their children's behavior while on Library property.

- Coal City staff will assist children with using the Library but will not supervise or babysit children. The Library and staff are neither designed nor licensed to provide childcare, daycare, or supervision of children.

- Children under eight (8) years old must not be left alone in the Library. A responsible person, age 14 years or older must remain with the child at all times.

- A child of any age who has a medical condition that requires substantial monitoring must not be left alone in the Library, even briefly. A responsible adult (parent, guardian, sibling, or babysitter) must be in attendance in the same department of the Library as the child and must maintain an awareness of the child's location and activity at all times.

Children Found Unattended during the Library's Regular Hours of Service.

1. An unattended child found frightened or crying or any unattended child under age 8 in the building will be approached and reassured by a staff member.

2. If the child's caregiver cannot be found in the immediate area, the child will be taken to the nearest public service or information desk. At least one

other staff member will be informed that an unattended child is being assisted. The person-in-charge may be called to assist.

3. Staff at the appropriate location will ask the child her/his name and that of her/his parent or caregiver.
4. Staff will locate the parent or caregiver responsible for the child.
 - a. If the parent or caregiver is in the building, staff will page the parent or the caregiver:

Upon reuniting the child with the parent or caregiver, express the Library's concern for the welfare of children and explain the Library's policy. Written information regarding the policy may also be given to the parent or caregiver.

- b. If the parent/caregiver is not in the building staff will:

Contact the person-in-charge of the building. With the child's help, obtain the parent's name and telephone number. Stay with the child until the parent can be located. Call the parent to inform her/him of the Library's policy and request that the parent pick up the child.

If the parent cannot be located or does not respond to the phone request within 15 minutes, building staff will call the police and ask that they assume responsibility for the child.

Children Under the Age of 14 Found Unattended at Closing

1. If the parent or caregiver cannot be located within the building staff will:
 - a. Contact the person-in-charge of the building. With the child's help, obtain the parent's name and telephone number.

- c. Call the parent to inform her/him of the Library's policy and request that the parent pick up the child.
- d. Explain the Library's policy and give a copy of this policy to the parent when the child is picked up.

2. If the parent or caregiver cannot be located:

- a. Call the police 15 minutes after closing and ask that they assume responsibility for any child who has not been picked up by a parent.
- b. Wait with the child inside the Library building until the parent or police arrive. The person-in-charge and another staff person will be responsible for waiting with the child.
- c. Under no circumstances take a child out of the Library building, take a child home, or stay alone with a child.