



UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY

Children are welcome and encouraged to use the Ferndale Area District Library ("Library") at all times. However, Library staff cannot take responsibility for the care of children of any age. The public library staff does not have the right to serve *in loco parentis* (in place of a parent), nor can they provide direct care and supervision.

The Ferndale Area District Library Board ("Library Board") adopts the following Unattended Children Policy ("Policy") with regard to children at the Library.

I. Definitions

- A. "Child" means a minor under the age of 18.
- B. "Caregiver" is defined as a parent, guardian, or other person aged 13 years or older who is responsible for one or more children who are not yet 10.
- C. "Unattended Child" is a Child under the age of 10.

II. Guidelines for Supervision

- A. No Child under the age of 10 shall be left unattended without the supervision of their Caregivers as defined below:
 - 1. Children who are under the age of 8 must have a Caregiver in the same space (Kids Corner, courtyard, study room, etc) who is actively supervising the Child.
 - 2. Children who are 8 or 9 years old must have a Caregiver in the library building.
 - 3. Children ages 10-12 years old do not need a Caregiver in the building, but cannot act as a Caregiver.
 - 4. If a Child under the age of 10 is attending a Library-sponsored program on the premises, Caregiver is to remain on the premises for the duration of the program.
- B. Children of any age who, because of developmental disability, mental illness, physical disability, or any other reason, require ongoing supervision or personal care shall be attended by a responsible Caregiver at all times.

III. Rules and Regulations Regarding Children

- A. All patrons, including children, are expected to comply with the Library's policies, including its Patron Behavior Policy. Caregivers shall review and be fully aware of all Library policies governing children, particularly the Internet Use Policy.
- B. Caregivers are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children regardless of age while in the Library.
- C. Library Staff will not be expected to supervise or monitor children's behavior.
- D. Library Staff will not be responsible if unattended children of any age leave the Library premises alone or with other persons. Furthermore, library staff will not be responsible for children who may be asked to leave the Library if they are in violation of Library policy.
- E. The Library requests that all unattended children be picked up at least ten (10) minutes before closing time. Caregivers need to be aware of when the Library closes.
- F. Children 10 years or older must know their telephone number and other contact information if they are unattended at the Library.
- G. It is a violation of Library policy not to come immediately and pick up your unattended child if the Library calls.

IV. Unattended Child

- A. Though staff will always respond with care and concern, they cannot assume responsibility for the direct care of an Unattended Child.
- B. When a Child who is under the age of 8 is discovered without a caregiver in the room, or a Child who is 8 or 9 is not able to find a Caregiver in the building, library staff on duty are instructed to:
 - 1. Attempt to locate the Caregiver in the library and explain the Unattended Children Policy.
- C. An Unattended Child must contact their Caregiver at least fifteen (15) minutes before the library closes if they require transport. Library staff will assist any Child under the age of 18 in contacting their Caregiver.
- D. Library staff may also attempt to contact a Caregiver of a Child of any age if:
 - 1. The health or safety of a Child of is in doubt;
 - 2. A Child is frightened while alone at the Library;
 - 3. The behavior of a Child violates Library policy.
 - 4. A Child needs assistance procuring transportation at closing time.

- E. If a Caregiver is contacted because of the reasons in this subsection and (1) cannot be reached within fifteen (15) minutes after being contacted or (2) fails to arrive within a reasonable time after being contacted, Library staff will contact law enforcement officials to take charge of the situation involving the Child. This is only required if the Child is unable to leave the Library on their own because of transportation or other reasons.
- F. Library employees are not permitted to transport an Unattended Child under any circumstances.
- G. Library staff will document the above with an Incident Report.

V. Violation and Appeal Section

- A. Violations and appeals of this Policy shall be processed according to the Library Violations and Appeal Policy.

Approved:

Ferndale Area District Library Board of Trustees

Effective:

Revised: