

Heermance Memorial Library Unattended Children Policy

The Heermance Memorial Library wants children to use its facilities and services. The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern of the library staff. **The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with library personnel.** Librarians cannot be responsible for children who are unattended.

The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of young users:

Children from birth through 8 years of age must be attended and adequately supervised by a responsible person (parent, guardian, other caregiver, or mature adolescent (age 14 or older). If unattended children in this age group are found, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver. If the parent/caregiver cannot be reached, a staff member will notify the police.

Children ages 8-13 may be left in the library for reasonable periods of time provided they demonstrate purposeful intent to use library resources, and that their behavior is not disruptive to other patrons or library staff. Staff will warn children if their behavior is not acceptable, and they may be ordered to leave the building if their behavior does not improve. If removed from the building due to unacceptable behavior the parent/guardian may be notified. Children in this age group should have the telephone number of someone who can help them in the event of a health emergency or other unforeseen circumstance such as an unexpected library closing.

Parents, guardians and/or caregivers are responsible for the conduct of their minor children (under 18 years of age) in the library or on library grounds, regardless of whether they are in the company of their children or not.

If the library is closing and an unattended child is left at the library without transportation home, library staff will allow the child to call home to remind their parents, guardians or caregivers to pick them up. If a child is unable to contact their parents, guardians or caregivers, library staff will remain no longer than 20 minutes after closing. At that time, local law authorities will be contacted, and the child will be placed in their care. Staff members will not drive the unattended child from the library to another location. Any time an unattended child is left more than 5 minutes after library closing the staff will complete an incident report.

Violation of the unattended children policy constitutes grounds for suspension of library privileges for the family.

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