

XVII. UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY

Children are welcome in our Library, and we are concerned about their safety and welfare. However, parents and caregivers are responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behavior of their children while the children are in the Library.

Library staff members cannot, however, supervise children or function as substitute baby-sitters. Parents and responsible persons need to be as careful of their children's safety in the Library as they would be in a shopping mall or any other public building. Children can easily wander out the door, into the street or parking lot. They can be injured by swinging doors or by falls from furniture.

We respect the privacy of all library patrons and will intervene only when, in the opinion of Library staff, the safety and well-being of a child or adult is threatened.

The Board of Directors of the Sandusky Library has, therefore, established the following policies for the Library system:

POLICY ON UNATTENDED CHILDREN

Children under age six (6) may not be left unattended in the Library without a responsible, non-library employee. Parents and/or responsible persons are accountable for their children's behavior and safety while in the Library. Children over the age of six (6) and under the age of thirteen (13) should not be left unaccompanied in the Library for prolonged periods of time or on a repetitive daily or weekly basis. Small children must be accompanied in the elevator by a responsible, non-library employee.

CLOSING TIME PROCEDURES FOR UNATTENDED CHILDREN, 17 AND UNDER

If a staff member or security person observes an unattended child fifteen (15) minutes prior to closing, that staff member or security person will ask the child what his/her provisions are for getting home. If the child seems unsure, the staff member in charge of the Library or security staff will call the parents. If closing time arrives and the child is still in the Library:

1. An attempt will be made to call the parents. If a parent is contacted, insist that the child be picked up immediately.
2. If a parent cannot be reached, the police department will be contacted, with the request that someone pick up the child as abandoned.
3. The staff member in charge or security staff and one other staff member will remain on the Library premises with the child until the parent, guardian, or police officer arrives.
4. A copy of the Library policy on Unattended Children will be handed to the child's parents
5. Under no circumstances shall a staff member take a child off Library premises.

If any youth is left at the Library after closing, the parent's name and address should be obtained and sent to the Assistant Director. If this occurs more than once, the Assistant Director will send a letter to the parents stressing that the Library and its employees cannot be responsible for youths not picked up at the Library at closing.