

UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY

The Trustees of the Sinclairville Free Library are concerned for the wellbeing of this community's children and cannot be held responsible for incidents, accidents, or other liabilities arising from the actions of unattended children.

The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the Library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with Library staff. Library staff cannot be responsible for children who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior. Children who exhibit inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the Library. If the child is unable to leave the Library without an adult, he/she should not be in the Library without an adult.

All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency. If a child is found to be unattended, Library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the Library and inform him/her of the Unattended Child Policy. If the parent/caregiver cannot be located, Library staff will contact the Chautauqua County Sheriff's Department to assist the child.

The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of children.

- Children under the age of 8 must have a parent/caregiver in the immediate vicinity of (and in visual contact with) the child. The parent/caregiver must be at least 14 years old and must carry personal identification. Children can be left in the care of an older sibling if that sibling is at least 14 years old. A child can attend a Library program without a parent/caregiver in the room as long as the parent/caregiver remains in the Library and immediately joins the child at the end of the program.
- If a child under the age of 8 is found unattended, Library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the Library and inform him/her of the Unattended Child Policy. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, Library staff will contact the Chautauqua County Sheriff's Department. If a child under the age of 8 violates the Library's Code of Conduct, the child and the parent/caregiver will be informed of the policy. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child and parent/caregiver may be asked to leave the Library.
- Children ages 8 and up may use the Library unattended. However, the parent/caregiver is still responsible for the behavior and the wellbeing of the child. The child is expected to follow the Library's Code of Conduct policy and may be asked to leave the Library if she/he exhibits inappropriate behavior. If a child ages 8 to 10 is not able to leave the Library without an adult, he/she should not be in the Library alone. An attempt will be made to notify the parent/caregiver whenever possible if a child is asked to leave the library. However, the Library assumes no responsibility for the whereabouts of an unattended child who has been asked to leave Library property.
- Teenagers are considered adult users. However, they are the legal responsibility of their parent/legal guardian and should have an emergency contact available.

In any situation involving the safety of children, and specifically whenever the parent/caregiver or police are contacted, staff will complete an Incident Report.

Reviewed by the Board of Trustees, Sinclairville Free Library, June 28, 2023