

UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of the St. Charles Public Library District's policy on unattended children is to ensure the safety of children using the Library. The Library does not serve in place of the parent, and does not assume responsibility for unattended children. Any public place may be dangerous for a child who is left unattended.

Guidelines

The St. Charles Public Library District is not responsible for unattended children. While the Library encourages children of all ages to use the Library, it does not provide childcare nor assume any parental responsibilities for children while they are in the Library. Parents and caregivers are responsible for monitoring their children's safety, activities, and behavior while visiting the Library. In some instances, staff may need to intervene to resolve issues quickly, efficiently, and without bias or judgement.

A child left unattended in the Library in violation of this policy, or a child any age habitually left unattended, may be deemed to be at risk. In such situations, Library staff may contact local law enforcement and/or child protective authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.

Levels of supervision required:

1. Children under the age of three must always be in close proximity and within sight of the adult responsible for their safety.
2. Children ages nine and under must be directly supervised by a parent or responsible caregiver (age 14 or over) at all times while in the Library. Parents or responsible caregivers must remain in the same area of the Library unless the child is attending a Library program, in which case they must remain in the Library building.
3. Children 10 and older may be left unattended providing they are mature enough to follow library rules and observe proper conduct. Such children are subject to the same rules of behavior as other patrons and the same consequences apply, including being asked to leave the Library. If a parent or caregiver cannot be contacted or located within 15 minutes, law enforcement will be contacted to take custody of the child.
4. Children under the age of 14 left unattended at closing time may be deemed at risk. Children will not be dismissed from the Library building by Library staff until transportation is secured. If a parent or caregiver cannot be contacted or located within 15 minutes of the Library's closing time, law enforcement will be contacted to take custody of the child. Parents of children not picked up promptly at closing time will be given or sent a letter stating the Library's hours of operation and policy regarding children left unattended when the Library is closed.
5. Library employees will not give children or other patrons rides in personal or library vehicles.

Adopted: 2/11/87

Revised: 3/20/02; 7/13/05; 10/26/05; 4/10/24