

Jesse M. Smith Memorial Library

Policy on Unattended Children

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees 7/13/17

It is the mission of the Jesse Smith Memorial Library to provide a safe and appropriate environment in which library users of all ages have access to library materials and services. The library is a public building with trained staff whose role it is to provide and assist with the use of these materials and services. It is not consistent with library policy to provide any kind of supervision of children beyond that associated with planned activities, programs or services designed for specific age groups. Nor does the library or its staff assume responsibility for the safety of unattended minor children left in the library.

“The library” is defined to mean all parts of the interior of the library, including, without limitation, the entrance, grounds, and parking lot.

Accordingly, in all departments of the library, children under the age of **10** must always be accompanied by a parent, guardian or responsible caregiver over the age of 13. Parents/caregivers must remain in the building while their children (under the age of 10 years) are attending all organized library programs. If unattended children under the age of 10 are in the library, staff will attempt to contact the child’s parents or caregivers. If this is not accomplished the police may be called to assist in the situation.

Children 10 years and older may use any part of the library, unaccompanied, as long as they observe the rules of patron conduct as outlines in the library’s *Policy on Safety and Disruptive Behavior*. Parents must also remember that libraries are public buildings and as such anyone can enter the building and use the computers and other services. It is not the responsibility of library staff to watch the interaction of children and other patrons. At all times parents are responsible for the behavior and safety of their children in the library, whether or not the parents are present.

Children under the age of 13 left unattended in the library at closing time will be given ample opportunity to call for a ride. At least two staff members will wait with the child in the building for a maximum of ten minutes past closing for the child’s ride to arrive. If the child is still at the library ten minutes past closing time, library staff will call the police for assistance.

The Children’s Services area is dedicated to providing information and related services and/or materials to children aged birth through thirteen. In addition these services and materials are provided to all persons requiring information and/or materials which are intended for this age group. Any person not using the Children’s Room for the above purposes, and who is older than 13 years of age, may be asked to leave the area.