

Madison Public Library
UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY

Mission Statement

The Madison Public Library is the community's center for ideas, information, learning, and connections. The Madison Public Library seeks to provide enjoyment, education, information and guidance through materials suited for the Borough of Madison.

Purpose

This policy is intended to provide guidance for leaving a child unattended, or without a responsible caregiver, in the library.

Responsibility

The responsibility for these guidelines ultimately rests with the Library Board of Trustees. The authority and responsibility for setting these guidelines rests with the Library Director, who delegates this task to qualified professional staff.

Guidelines

The Madison Public Library encourages children of all ages to visit the Library. However, the well-being and security of young children left unattended is a serious concern as the library is a public building.

Parents and caregivers, not the Library and Library staff members, are responsible for the safety, behavior, and supervision of the child at all times. At no time will the Library or Library staff members stand *in loco parentis*, or in place of, a parent or caregiver.

Definitions.

1. **“Appropriate Caregiver”** refers to a parent, guardian, or caregiver aged 13 or over.
2. **“Unattended Child”** refers to a child of any age, who is apparently not accompanied by an Appropriate Caregiver.

Following are the guidelines which must be met by an Appropriate Caregiver accompanying or leaving a child unattended in the Library:

- Children under the age of 8 years must be in direct supervision (within sight or conversation distance) by an Appropriate Caregiver at all times.
- Children ages 8-10 may be under the indirect supervision of an Appropriate Caregiver, but this individual must be present on library property at all times.
- Individuals ages 11 and older may be left alone in the library.
- An Appropriate Caregiver is required to be at the Library no later than 15 minutes before closing to pick up an unattended child. If no Appropriate

Caregiver can be contacted after closure, the Madison Police Department will be called.

Unattended Children and Programming

- An Appropriate Caregiver must remain on library property, preferably in the children's room or in the vicinity of where the program is located, while a child under the age of 11 is attending a program.
- Staff members will not release a child from a program without an Appropriate Caregiver being present.
- Family/All-ages programs require an Appropriate Caregiver to be present at all times.

Unattended Children and Computer Use

- Please refer to the Children Safety on the Internet section in the Computer & Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

General Behavior

Children, like all of our patrons, are expected to behave appropriately while in the Library. Please refer to our Patron Code of Conduct for these guidelines. Children of any age who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves may not be left alone in the Library or on Library grounds at any time and must have adequate supervision from an Appropriate Caregiver.

- If these guidelines are not adhered to, a staff member will issue a warning that the current behavior is unacceptable under the Patron Code of Conduct.
- If the unacceptable behavior continues, library staff may ask the child to leave or contact an Appropriate Caregiver.
- If an Appropriate Caregiver cannot be contacted, the Madison Police Department will be called.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees at an Open Public Meeting, following appropriate notice.

April 13, 2023