



Unattended Children Policy
Kent Free Library

Approved: September 16, 2004

Revised: May 20, 2010

Unattended Children Policy

The Kent Free Library exists to meet the educational, informational, cultural and recreational needs of users of all ages, especially children. The library is proud to serve a diverse population that includes many families, and strives to create a welcoming, non-disruptive, and safe environment.

Due to demand for the library's services, the behavior of each and every patron cannot be monitored at all times. Therefore, children must be appropriately supervised. This will help to ensure that the library is safe for young users, and promotes an atmosphere that is pleasant for adult patrons. It is for these reasons that children of the following ages should not be left in the library without the appropriate supervision.

Children Ages 0-6

Any child 6 years and younger must be in the immediate company of a responsible caregiver who is age thirteen or older. The only instance in which exception may be taken is if the child is attending a library program.

Children Ages 7-10

Children between these ages may be left shortly without the direct supervision of a responsible party who is thirteen or older. However, the caregiver must remain in the same area as the child and will be summoned if the child becomes disruptive.

Children Ages 11-12

Children between these ages are welcome to use the library independently. They should not, however, be left for an extended period of time. If the child is left unattended for longer than three hours, or if he or she becomes disruptive, a staff member will contact a responsible party to collect the child.

Children Ages 13-17

Young adults between these ages may use the library at will, as long as their behavior does not disrupt other library users. If a child between these ages should become a problem, a responsible party will be contacted by a library staff member and the child will need to be supervised by a parent or guardian on future visits.

Events and Programming for Children

Patrons frequently ask if they may “drop off” their child in a library program. The Kent Free Library cannot be responsible for children left at a library program. Therefore, it is recommended that in the case of small children, parents remain in the immediate area as children in this age group sometimes become anxious when a parent is not in view. Older children may be left at the event. However, parents are expected to remain in the library so that they may be summoned should the need arise.

Children Left After Closing

All children are to be picked up prior to the library’s close. If a child has not been collected by closing time, a staff member will contact a responsible party. The child must be collected within fifteen minutes of the call. During this time a staff member will wait with the child outside the building. When the child is collected, the adult will be given a copy of the unattended children policy. If the staff member is unable to locate a ride for the child, or if no one is able to pick the child up within fifteen minutes, the police will be contacted to pick up the child. A staff member will wait with the child until the police arrive. Under no circumstances will a member of the library staff take a child home. Children may not be left on library property before the library is open or after the library is closed.

Children are welcome to use the computers at the library. Please be advised that parents or guardians are solely responsible for the content of the material that the child may access while on the Internet. Patrons concerned about their child’s Internet use must arrange to be with their child while he or she is using the Internet.

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