

Unattended Children and Child Safety

Revised May 2019

The Library seeks to be a safe place for people of all ages, but the safety of children is of the highest importance. To that end, the Library has adopted a policy on “Unacceptable Conduct” along with other policies to ensure that the Library environment is a safe and welcoming place. While providing a safe environment is important, the care of children is ultimately the responsibility of the caregiver(s).

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- A “child” is considered to be a patron who is 17 years of age or younger;
- A child is considered to be “unattended” when the caregiver is unable to communicate with the child verbally at a reasonable volume;
- A “disruptive” child is one whose actions disturb others or damage items belonging to the Library or to others;
- A “caregiver” must be over 13 years of age (meaning a “child” might also be a “caregiver” to other children who are under the age of 13).

Neglect or Abuse

The Library is not responsible for unattended children and is mandated by statute to report suspected neglect or abuse. (KRS 620.030: *“Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe a child is dependent, neglected, or abused shall immediately cause an oral or written report to be made...”*)

In no instance may a child under the age of thirteen be left without a caregiver physically present in the building.

Neglect will be reported to law enforcement in the following cases:

- Children aged 5 or under who are left unattended for any length of time;
- Children aged 6-9 who are left unattended for more than 30 minutes;
- Children aged 10-12 who are left unattended for 2 hours or more.
- Any case of suspected abuse will be reported to the Director.

Disruptive behavior

The Library will report to law enforcement any instance where an unattended child is disruptive and does not respond to the correction of staff. Law enforcement may be asked to remove unattended children whose caregivers cannot be found.

People of any age with special needs which render necessary supervision, shall be accompanied by a caregiver at all times.

Children left after closing

When a child (under 17 years of age) is unattended at the time the Library closes, two staff members will remain with the child and make a reasonable attempt to contact the caregiver. If staff are unable to contact the caregiver, law enforcement will be called to

take custody of the child. Staff will remain with the child until law enforcement takes custody.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES will library staff transport or take a child away from the library building.