

UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY

The Board of Trustees and the Northborough Free Library staff hope that the children who use our library will find our facility to be a warm and inviting place to develop a love of books, reading, and libraries.

Many programs are offered to make libraries enticing to children, but children left unattended when no library programs are offered often become anxious, restless, and sometimes, disruptive. Young children are not safe when left unattended in the library. The staff is not able to supervise them and cannot know if children leaving the building are leaving with parents or strangers. In order to create an environment of safety and maintain an atmosphere where reading and study can be encouraged, the following policy has been established.

1. Parents or their designated caregiver are responsible for the behavior of their child or children in the library. Children eleven years or younger shall, at all times, be attended and adequately supervised by either the parent or their designated caregiver and not library personnel. During scheduled library programs, the parent or caregiver may elect to go elsewhere in the library, but must remain in the building.

2. Parents shall be aware of the library hours and keep in mind that those hours can change due to holiday schedules, inclement weather or other unforeseen emergencies. Parents must make contingency plans for the child's immediate pick-up due to unexpected closings. To avoid your child becoming anxious or frightened, please inform them of your whereabouts and how to contact you in an emergency.

3. Children twelve years and older may use the library unattended, subject to other rules and regulations in effect at the Northborough Free Library, concerning behavior, conduct, and demeanor.

4. Persons responsible for children who have special problems related to physical, mental ability, or *disruptive behavior, shall remain with their children at all times and the above mentioned exception or absence during supervised library programs shall not apply to these children.

5. The Northborough Free Library assumes no responsibility for children of any age left unattended at the library. Parents assume all liability for damage done by their children to the library facility.

*Disruptive behavior would be any noisy, boisterous, or acting-out behavior which is inappropriate in a setting where business is conducted.

ATTENTION PARENTS!

The Board of Trustees and the Northborough Free Library staff hope that children who use our library will find our facility to be a warm and inviting place to develop a love of books and reading.

Out of concern for the safety and well being of our young patrons we would like all parents to be aware of the following:

Children are the sole responsibility of their parents or their designated caregiver. Children eleven years or younger shall at all times be attended and adequately supervised by either the parent or the designated caregiver. During scheduled library programs, the parent or caregiver may elect to go elsewhere in the library, but must remain in the building. The library is a busy public building and the staff is unable to supervise or watch children.

Please be aware of the library hours and keep in mind that those hours can change due to inclement weather, power failures or holiday schedules and make contingency plans for your child's immediate pickup due to unexpected closings. To avoid your child becoming anxious or frightened, inform them of your whereabouts and how to contact you in an emergency.

Library staff cannot stay after hours to wait with your child, and under no circumstances shall a staff member take a child out of the building to transport the child to another location. The staff will contact the police if a parent has not arrived by closing time and your child has been unable to reach you by phone. The police will then take responsibility for your child.

Children are our most precious commodity - help us protect them!

PROCEDURES

An unattended child found frightened or crying in the building should be reassured by a library staff member and brought to the children's librarian or person in charge. With the child's help, the staff member should obtain the child's phone number and contact the parent or designated caregiver that the child needs to be picked up immediately. When the responsible adult arrives, they should be given a copy of the library's policy on unattended children with a brief explanation of that policy. If the parent cannot be reached within an hour the police should be notified and asked to assume responsibility for the child.

If a child is alone at library closing time, the staff will attempt to call the parent or designated caregiver. If no one can be reached on the first attempt the staff member in charge will call the police to assume responsibility for the child. A staff member will remain with the child inside the library entrance until either the parent, designated caregiver, or the police arrive. The library policy will be explained and a copy of the written policy will be given to the responsible adult. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL A LIBRARY STAFF MEMBER TRANSPORT OR TAKE THE CHILD AWAY FROM THE LIBRARY BUILDING.**