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**SECTION:** Library Services  
**SUBJECT:** Unattended Children  
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## **UNATTENDED CHILDREN**

The Danville Public Library welcomes the use of its services and facilities by children.

Staff members are committed:

- to helping children find materials for school work and recreational reading.
- to providing an environment that encourages study and exploration.
- to planning short programs that inform and enrich.

Staff members are also committed to the well-being and safety of children. However, library facilities are not designed or licensed to provide basic child care needs such as healthy snacks, physical exercise, or emergency care if the child becomes ill or upset. Any public place may be dangerous for a child who is left unattended for long hours or who is left stranded after closing hours.

The library encourages parents to consider the safety and well-being of their children and the needs of other library users of all ages.

### **Policy Statement**

1. Parents may not leave children age 7 or under unattended in the library. Disruptive children, attended or unattended, age 7 or older may be asked to leave the library after one warning.
2. Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children in the library, whether or not the parent is present.

### **Procedures**

#### **A. Children Age 7 or Under Left Unattended in the Library:**

1. If it is determined that a child is lost or unattended, a staff member should bring the child to the children's services staff member or the person in charge.

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2. The children's services staff member or person in charge should try to locate the parent or responsible adult:
  - Ask the child where the parent is or walk around the library to find the parent. If the parent is not found in the building, a library staff member should stay with the child until the parent can be located, through the circulation system database or telephone book.
  - If the parent has not been located within an hour, or if the library is closing, the person in charge shall call the police.
  - Under no circumstances should a library staff member take a child out of the library building. If the library has been closed, then two staff members should wait with the child inside the library building. No staff member should take the child home.

#### **B. Disruptive Attended Children**

Disruptive behavior is any form of behavior that seriously or constantly disturbs library patrons or staff, damages library property, interferes with library service or endangers the well-being of the disruptive child or others.

1. Children who are disruptive will be asked by a library staff member to behave.
2. If the disruptive behavior continues, a staff member should inform the parent or guardian that their child is disturbing others.
3. If the parent or guardian refuses or is unable to control the behavior of the child, the family will be asked to leave the library.

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**C. Disruptive Unattended Children Over Age 7**

1. A library staff member will tell the child that the child is causing a disturbance and this is a warning. The next time the child will be asked to leave.
2. If the disruptive behavior continues, a library staff member will tell the child to leave the building and will follow through to see that the child does leave.
3. If the child does not cooperate, a library staff member will call the police.

**D. Disruptive Unattended Children Age 7 or Under**

1. A library staff member will ask the child to correct the behavior.
2. If the behavior persists, the library staff member will obtain the child's and the parent's names and attempt to locate the parent in the building. If the parent is located in the building, the library staff member will explain that the child is being disruptive, and inform the parent of the library's policy. If the parent(s) refuse(s) or is/are unable to control the child, the family will be asked to leave.
3. If the parent or guardian cannot be located within the building, the library staff member in charge will call the parent. They will be informed that their child is being disruptive. The policy on unattended children will be explained. If the parent or guardian is unable to come at once, the caregiver will be told the child may stay this one time, but the police will be called if the problem happens again.
4. If the parent or guardian cannot be contacted within an hour, or if the library is closing, the police will be called.
5. If the parent or guardian cannot be located and the child must leave, the Children's Services staff member or the person in charge will send a letter to the parent, describing the incident and communicate the library's policy on unattended children.
6. If satisfaction cannot be obtained from the parent or guardian, the incident will be referred to the Danville Public Library's Security Unit.

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