



Unattended Child Policy

The Trustees of the Highwood Public Library are concerned for the wellbeing of this community's children and cannot be held responsible for incidents, accidents, or other liabilities arising from the actions of unattended children. All Library patrons, including children, are expected to maintain appropriate behavior, keep noise within levels which do not interfere with the activities of others, avoid actions which could cause injuries, damage property, or offend others. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the Library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with Library staff.

Policy:

- For the safety of all children who visit the Highwood Public Library, children eight years of age and younger must be accompanied and directly supervised by a responsible adult or caregiver 14 years or older, who assumes full accountability for the child's safety and behavior in the Library. "Directly supervised" means the child and the caregiver must be able to observe one another at all times.
- The Library staff members do not serve *in locum parentis* for children in the library. Children age nine and older may use the library unattended provided that their behavior is not disruptive.
Disruptive behavior is any form of behavior that seriously or constantly disturbs patrons or staff, damages library property, interferes with library service, or endangers the wellbeing of the disruptive child or others.

General Procedure:

- If a child age eight years of age or younger is found to be unattended, Library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the Library and inform him/her of the Unattended Child Policy. The child may also attempt to reach the parent/caregiver. If the parent/caregiver cannot be located, Library staff will contact the Highwood Police Department to assist the child.
- Disruptive children, attended or unattended age eight or older may be asked to leave the library after one warning. In such instances, parents will be contacted or, if the parent is unavailable, police custody will be utilized.

At Library programs:

- For all Library programs, caregivers of children eight years of age and younger must remain in the Library and be readily available.



At closing time:

- If a child is left unattended at the time of closing and attempts to reach the parents have failed, the Highwood Police Department will be called to take responsibility for the child. Staff members will never transport a child or children home.

Approved: November 27, 2023