

Policy

TITLE: Unattended Children in the library

Effective Date: 4/13/2011

Authorized by Library Board of Trustees

Dates of Review: 4/96; 4/98; 5/00; 3/02; 4/11

Purpose

The Chippewa Falls Public library welcomes children and families in using its facilities. The purpose of this policy is to encourage parents and legal guardians to exercise reasonably responsible care, supervision, and control over their minor children in order to prevent juvenile victimization and to protect the health, safety, and welfare of children and also to make the library a fair and enjoyable environment for everyone.

Guidelines

1. Children under the age of eight must be accompanied by an adult or responsible sibling age **12** or older while in the library. Children under the age of eight must also have a parent or caregiver in the immediate vicinity of and remain in visual contact with the child. Children under the age of eight years may be left unattended in the library if the child is participating in a library program; in such a case, parents or guardians are strongly encouraged to make contact with library staff regarding contact information, time of return, special considerations, etc.
2. Children age eight and older may use the library on their own, but may be asked to leave the library if exhibiting inappropriate behavior. If a child in this age group is not able to leave the library without an adult, he/she should not be in the library alone. The library reserves the right to contact parents or proper authorities if a child is left alone in the library and presents behavior that is unacceptable.
3. Parents or a responsible adult or sibling are responsible for their children's behavior while in the library. In the event that a situation arises, such as a child left unsupervised while a parent uses the library (including the computers), the library staff reserves the right to intervene in the situation directly to address the behavior themselves or indirectly by alerting the child's responsible party to the behavior. If the child continues to be disruptive, and the caretaker does not respond, both the child and caretaker may be asked to leave the library.

Some behaviors and instances that may be cause for staff intervention include:

- a) Fighting
- b) Vandalism
- c) Rough play
- d) Excessive noise
- e) Running

f) Misuse and/or disordering of library materials

Library staff is allowed to use their best judgment if they witness a child being improperly supervised and putting themselves or anyone else in an unsafe situation.

4. If staff has reason to suspect that a child has been left at closing time, staff will ask if the child is waiting to be picked up, determine the child's name and call the child's parents. If there is no response to the call, the Chippewa Falls Police Department will be called to handle the situation and ensure the safety and well-being of the child. This could involve an intervention by the Department of Children and Families.

5. Signs will be posted in the library building as follows:

“While in the library, young children must be accompanied by an adult. At library closing time, a parent or guardian whose children have not been picked up will be contacted. If there is no response, the police will be contacted and this could involve an intervention by the Department of Children and Families.”