

Island Park Public Library

Policy on Unattended Children

The Island Park Public Library Board of Trustees and staff welcome all children into our library. Responsibility for children using the library rests with the parent/guardian or assigned caregiver, not with library personnel.

Children **over the age of 10** may come into the library unattended. However, it is expected they will not display disruptive behavior such as, without limitation, running, throwing, eating, loud talking, abusive language, fighting, moving furniture, vandalism, excessive socializing or any other activities which disrupt the library. These types of behavior may represent a physical danger to the child and interfere with the legitimate library business of other patrons or staff.

For the protection and well-being of children who enjoy our library and the right of others to use the facilities without disruption, the following policy and procedures have been adopted.

I. Unattended Children (under the age of 10)

1. Parents/guardians or assigned caregivers are responsible for the behavior of their children while in the library and may not leave children too young to care for themselves.
2. An older child must be at least **12 years of age** in order to be the caregiver for younger children in the library.
3. Should staff become aware that a children under the age of 10 is unattended, staff should try to locate the parent/guardian or assigned caregiver.
4. A staff member should walk through the library with the child and look for his/her parent/guardian or caregiver.
7. If the parent/guardian or caregiver is not in the building, staff should attempt to contact same by telephone.
8. When the parent/guardian or caregiver is located, they should be informed of the library's policy and asked to join the child at the library immediately.
9. If the parent/guardian or caregiver has not been located within a half-hour, or if the library is closing, a staff member shall call the police, who will assume responsibility for the child. If the library is closing, two staff members should remain with the child inside the library entrance until the police arrive.
10. **Under no circumstances should a staff member put a child into his/her car to drive the child home. Nor should staff walk a child home.**

13. After the incident has been resolved, the staff member(s) involved shall file an incident report(s) with the Director's office as soon as possible.

II. Disruptive Unattended Children (over the age of 10)

- a. Staff will instruct the disruptive child to behave appropriately and inform him/her that this is a warning and that next time he/she will be asked to leave the library.
- b. If the disruptive behavior continues, staff will tell the youngster to leave the library. Staff shall accompany the child to the door and inform the Director or person-in-charge who shall inform other staff members that the child is not permitted to return that day.
- c. If staff are concerned about asking the child to leave the library unaccompanied, staff should attempt to contact the parent/guardian or caregiver about the child's disruptive behavior. After informing the parent/guardian or caregiver of the library's policy, staff will ask that person to come for the child.
- d. If the parent/guardian or caregiver cannot be contacted within the hour, staff at their discretion may call the police to assume responsibility for the child. The staff member involved shall file an incident report with the Director's office as soon as possible after the incident is resolved.
- e. If a child exhibits disruptive behavior on a regular basis, the Director will make contact with the child's parent/guardian regarding future use of the library. The Director may impose temporary restrictions on library use, as appropriate.

Adopted 4/9/2014

