

Unattended Children's Policy

Purpose

Rawlins Municipal Library welcomes and encourages young visitors. Staff members are happy to assist children and families. However, the library is not able to provide short- or long-term childcare or be responsible for unattended children in the library. Children may be able to occupy their time for a short while, but when left unattended for any length of time it is easy for children to become bored, restless, and disruptive. The safety of children left alone in the library is a serious concern for staff members. It is the responsibility of parents, guardians or caregivers to keep children safe while in the library. It is not the library's intention to seek out unattended children, but rather to have a prepared response for when the when an issue presents itself.

Definitions

“Child”—For the purposes of this policy, a “child” and “children” are referred to as a child aged 8 and younger in the library. “Caregiver”—For the purposes of this policy, a “caregiver” is someone 14 years or older who is capable of watching a child or children in the library. “Parent or Guardian”—For the purposes of this policy, a “parent” or “guardian” is the legal caregiver who is responsible for children in the library.

“Unattended children”—For the purposes of this policy, “unattended children” is defined as a child under the age of 8 years old left alone in the library that is not within physical reach of a parent, guardian, or caregiver.

Policy

1. Children aged 8 and younger: A parent, guardian, or assigned child care provider must accompany and remain within physical reach of the child at all times. The designated caregiver must be 14 years or older and must be able to provide emergency contact information for the child.
2. When staff observe a child under the age of 8 alone in the library, the primary goal is to ensure the safety of the child. Library staff will attempt to locate the parent, guardian, or caregiver and explain to them the Unattended Children Policy. If library staff are unsuccessful in locating the parents or guardian in the library, staff will attempt to call them by phone. If unable to locate the responsible parent, guardian, or caregiver the police will be called to assist the child.
3. Children ages 9 and older: Children nine and older may be in the library without a parent, guardian, or assigned childcare provider but the child must abide by the Patron Code of Conduct Policy and Minor Computer Agreement.
4. Plans must be made for unattended children in the building at closing time. Thirty minutes before closing time, library staff will let children know they need to call or a ride home. Library staff are encouraged to help children use the phone to call for a ride. No child is allowed to wait outside after closing time for a ride alone. A minimum of two staff are required to wait with the

child in the library foyer of the library for a ride. Library staff are not permitted to give any patron a ride home from the library. If a parent or guardian does not pick up a child within 15 minutes of closing time, library staff are to contact the police and continue to wait with the child in the foyer until the police come to pick up the unattended child. Under no circumstances will children be allowed to wait outside for a ride.

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