

Holyoke Public Library Unattended Children Policy

Purpose

The Holyoke Public Library seeks to provide a safe, educational, and enjoyable place for children. The Unattended Children Policy has been adopted to ensure a safe and pleasant library experience for children of all ages.

It is important that parents, guardians, or caregivers (defined as a family member or helper 16 years of age or older who regularly looks after a child) fulfill their responsibility to an individual child's safety and well-being by adhering to the following:

Guidelines

- Children **10 YEARS OF AGE** or younger must be continually accompanied by a parent, guardian, or caregiver.
- Parents, guardians, or caregivers are responsible for the behavior of the child in the library and may be asked to leave the building if the situation becomes disruptive.
- Parents, guardians, or caregivers may use the Children's Room computers with a child. Computer sessions will be terminated if staff determines that the parent, guardian, or caregiver is not attending to the child.
- Parents, guardians, or caregivers should be familiar with the Library's hours of operation and close attention should be paid to unexpected closings (i.e. inclement weather). Prior arrangements and contingency plans for immediate pick-up should be discussed with the child.
- Library staff will not transport children from the library to any other location.
- Parents, guardians, or caregivers should not view the Library as an alternative for day care or after school programs.
- Children of any age with mental, physical, or emotional disabilities which render supervision necessary shall be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or caregiver at all times.
- Children 11 years of age and older may be left unattended providing they are mature enough to stay alone and maintain proper behavior. Such children are subject to the same rules of conduct as other patrons and the same consequences, including being asked to leave the Library.
- During school hours, minors are not allowed in the Library when not accompanied by a parent, guardian, or caregiver.
- Children left unattended in the Library in violation of this policy may be considered a child in need of care. Staff may contact the adult listed on the child's library card, or the matter may be referred to the Department of Children and Families or other authorities.