

## **Unattended Children Policy and Use of the Children's Room by Adults**

The New Haven Free Public Library welcomes children. The staff endeavors to create a comfortable environment so that time spent in the library fosters a positive attitude towards reading and libraries in general. Keep in mind that a library is a public area, and staff cannot guarantee the safety of unattended children. **Responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of children using the library rests with the parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver.**

In accordance with Connecticut state law, 53-21 a-c\*, the library adheres to the following policy to address children's safety while in the library:

1. Children under 12 years of age must at all times be under the direct supervision of an adult or a responsible person who is 15 years or older. If a child is found unattended, library staff will attempt to contact a parent/caregiver. If the designated individual does not respond in 30 minutes, we will contact the police.
2. Children 12 years and older may use the library unattended, subject to appropriate behavior. Even in their absence, the parent or caregiver is legally responsible for their children's behavior and safety.
3. Parents must pick up children at least 30 minutes before closing time. It is the parent/caregiver's responsibility to know the library hours. If an emergency arises, it is the parent/caregiver's responsibility to make alternative arrangements.
  - ✓ If 30 minutes before closing, no parent/caregiver has arrived, the librarian will ask the child to phone the parent or caregiver.
  - ✓ If the child is still waiting when the library closes, the police must be notified. A library staff member and security guard will remain with the child until police or the parent/caregiver arrives.

### **Use of the Children's Room by Adults**

1. Adults are allowed in the children's area when they are accompanying a child or when they require access to the children's collection. All library computers and electronic devices are reserved for use by children. The on-site manager/supervisor may grant exceptions.

\*Sec. 53-21a. **Leaving child unsupervised in place of public accommodation or motor vehicle.** (a) Any parent, guardian or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, of any child under the age of twelve years who knowingly leaves such child unsupervised in a place of public accommodation or a motor vehicle for a period of time that presents a substantial risk to the child's health or safety, shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

*Last reviewed, revised and approved by NHFPL Board of Directors, September 26, 2017.*

*Revised by Children's Room for system-wide use, April 5, 2009.*

*Approved by NHFPL Board of Directors, November 27, 2001.*