

Unattended Children Policy

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 toward 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 (“caregiver”).**

In accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53-21a, 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 of age or older. If a child is found unsupervised, Library staff will attempt to contact a caregiver. If there is no contact with a caregiver in 30 minutes, the police will be notified.
2. Children 12 years and older may use the Library unattended, subject to appropriate behavior. Even in their absence, the caregiver is responsible for their children’s behavior and safety.
3. Caregivers must pick up children at least 30 minutes before closing time. It is the caregiver’s responsibility to know the Library hours. If an emergency arises, it is the caregiver’s responsibility to make alternative arrangements.
 - ✓ If 30 minutes before closing, no caregiver has arrived, the librarian will ask the child to phone the 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 caregiver arrives.

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53-21a(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, February 23, 2021.

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