

Unattended Children Policy

The New Haven Free Public Library warmly welcomes children, with staff dedicated to fostering a comfortable environment that encourages a positive attitude toward reading and library services. As a public institution open to all, the Library cannot guarantee the security of unattended children.

Responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of children using the library rests with the parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver. Library staff are not responsible for the care or supervision of children.

In accordance with Conn Gen. Stat. 53-21a, the Library adheres to the following policy to address children's safety while in the Library:

- To maintain a safe environment for all users, children are expected to comply with the posted library Code of Conduct. Children who are not using the Library appropriately will be asked to leave.
- 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 conduct and safety.
- 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.
- 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 caregiver arrives.

*Sec. 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 25, 2025.

Previously approved by NHFPL Board of Directors, November 27, 2001, and February 23, 2021.