

PARK FOREST PUBLIC LIBRARY

POLICY VIII

SAFETY OF CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY

The Library endeavors to provide a suitable environment for children to use and enjoy its materials, programs, and other resources. However, parents should be aware that the Library is a public building open to all, and that staff is not able to monitor the safety or whereabouts of each child visiting the Library.

Parental Responsibility

Parents/Legal Guardians are solely responsible for their children while they are in the Library, whether or not the parents are in attendance. Children under the age of 9 must be attended by a parent or other responsible caregiver age 18 or older at all times while in the Library. Children and teens with special needs will receive accommodations.

All children must be picked up by closing time.

The Library staff will attempt to contact parents of children whose safety is in doubt. If parents or caregivers are unavailable, the staff will contact the Park Forest Police Department to provide custody.

During school hours, children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the staff will contact the Park Forest Police Department.

Adults in the Kids' Zone

The Kids' Zone is for children ages 12 years and younger. To provide an appropriate and safe atmosphere for children, adults (age 17 and over) who are not accompanied by children are to use the Kids' Zone only for the purpose of retrieving materials, or speaking with Library staff. Teens and adults with special needs who prefer to use the kids' zone area may do so with a parent or guardian. Please notify the staff if special accommodations are needed.

Procedures

If it is determined that a child is lost or unattended:

- Staff will ask the child where the parent is and use the in-house intercom system to attempt to locate the child's parent or caregiver.
- If there is no response to the announcement, staff will walk around the library with the child to try to find the parent.
- If a parent or caregiver is not found in the building, staff will call the parent and request that they pick up their child. Staff will obtain the phone number from the child or through the circulation database if necessary.

- If the parents cannot be reached within 30 minutes, or if they do not respond in 30 minutes, the police will be asked to assume responsibility.

If it is determined that a child is left unattended at closing time:

- Staff will call a parent or adult caregiver. If the parents do not arrive within 15 minutes, or if they do not respond within 15 minutes, the police will be asked to assume responsibility.
- If the child is under age 14, at least two staff members will wait with the child until the parents arrive.
- If, after 15 minutes, the parents do not arrive, staff members are to call the police and wait with the child until the police arrive. Staff that must wait will be paid for their time.
- Staff members are not allowed to drive the child home.
- If it is necessary for the Park Forest police to assume custody of an unattended child at the Park Forest Public Library, the staff will note in writing the officer's name, badge number, and the time the officer assumed custody.