

Westford Public Library

Unattended Minors Policy

(policy update 7/2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic)

The Westford Public Library welcomes the use of its facilities by children of all ages. Our services and programs are offered to make the library enticing to children, to encourage them to visit the library and to develop a love of books, reading and libraries. However, no public place, including the library, can guarantee the safety of an unattended child; it must be understood that the library does not act in *loco parentis* (in place of the parent).

Therefore, for the protection and well-being of children who enjoy our library, for the general welfare of all persons using the library, and for the prevention of undue disruption of normal library activities, the following rules and regulations apply:

1. Children under the age of 12 shall, at all times, be attended and adequately supervised by a parent or caregiver.
2. Children age 12 and above may use the library unattended, subject to rules and regulations concerning behavior, conduct, and demeanor.
 - i. Appropriate activities include: doing homework, writing reports, researching, browsing for books, quiet talking, enjoying the library's games, participating in a library program, using computers, thinking, daydreaming, and reading.
 - ii. Inappropriate activities include: running, throwing, loud or abusive talking, fighting, or any other activities which disrupt the library. Vandalism will not be tolerated. Adult supervision will be required for continuously disruptive children of any age.
3. The library assumes no responsibility for children of any age left unattended at the library. Parents or guardians assume all liability for personal injury and/or damage done by their children to the library facility.
4. If a child is injured, library staff will make their best effort to contact a parent or caregiver. If the staff is unable to reach a parent or caregiver, staff will seek emergency medical assistance at the parent's/guardian's expense. Staff will notify the parent/guardian or caregiver as soon as possible.
5. As closing time approaches, library staff will encourage unattended children to arrange for transportation. If a child is left unattended at closing time, the child will be requested to contact his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) to arrange safe transportation home. If these contact efforts are unsuccessful, the library staff member will seek assistance from the Vermont State Police or Sheriff. Library staff will not transport children. The parent/guardian may, at the Director's discretion, be charged for staff time.

**This policy was revised and approved by the Board of Trustees
of the Westford Public Library in July 2020 .**

Trustee Chair

Trustee

Trustee

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