

Kent County Public Library Unattended Children Policy

Policy: Kent County Public Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming environment that encourages children to visit the library, use the library collection, attend programs, access technology, and use other library resources.

However, library staff cannot be responsible for children who are left unattended on library premises and may not supervise, provide child care, or assume responsibility for the safety of unattended children.

A child under the age of 8 must be accompanied by a responsible caregiver who remains in the immediate vicinity of the child and actively monitors the child's safety and behavior. This includes a child participating in library sponsored programs.

A child who is 8 and above may be in the library without the presence of a caregiver. Like all library users, children must abide by KCPL's *Rules of Conduct* and may be asked to leave the library premises if they violate these rules.

If a child is engaging in high risk behavior, as defined in KCPL's *Rules of Conduct*, or appears to be in medical distress, library staff reserve the right to contact appropriate emergency services before attempting to contact a parent or guardian.

Date Revised: February 26, 2019

Signature:



Definitions: "Responsible Caregiver" – An individual who is at least 13-years-old and is providing active supervision to a child or children. This may be a parent, guardian, other relative, childcare provider, or other person selected by the child's parent or guardian to supervise the child.

"Unattended Child" – Any child under the age of 8 who is not accompanied and supervised by a responsible caregiver. This definition is based on Maryland Family Law and policy established by the Maryland Department of Human Services.

Procedures: If it is suspected that an unattended child is in the library, a staff member will determine the age of the child and whether the child knows if a caregiver is in the library. If so, the staff member will attempt to locate that person.

If a caregiver cannot be found in the library, the staff member will attempt to contact the child's parent or guardian using information provided by the child, the Library's patron database, and/or other resources. If contacted, the parent or guardian will be informed of this policy and advised that the child must be picked up immediately.

If the parent or guardian cannot be located or has been located, but the child is not picked up within a reasonable amount of time after the adult is contacted, a staff member will contact the Kent County Department of Social Services and/or the police.

Under no circumstances will a staff member take an unattended child off of library property or transport a child in a personal vehicle.