

## **Unattended Child Policy**

The staff of the Mansfield Public Library strives to create a warm, inviting, fun environment for children of all ages. The library offers many programs and services that encourage children to develop a love of reading and learning. The safety and well-being of children at the library is of serious concern.

**Young children are safe when supervised by a parent or caregiver while in the library. Parents should remember that the library is a public building available for the use of all. The Library staff is not responsible for the supervision of children left unattended by their parents or caregivers.**

To ensure the safety and well-being of children in the library, the following policies have been established:

- All children under the age of 5 must be accompanied and continually supervised by a parent or caregiver while in the library. Parents or caregivers are responsible for the actions and safety of children visiting the library.
- Parents or caregivers must stay in the library building while their child under the age of 10 is attending a library sponsored program.
- At the discretion of a responsible adult, a child age 10 or older may be left unattended for the period of time needed to select materials, complete a homework assignment, or attend a program. The child must know the phone number of the responsible adult. Should the need arise, library staff will contact the parent/caregiver. Children should not be left for excessively long (more than 2 hours) periods of time. Children will be expected to display appropriate behavior.
- Teenagers are considered adult users. However, they are the legal responsibility of their parent/guardian and should have an emergency contact available.
- The library cannot assume responsibility for children while a parent/caregiver is participating in a library program or other activity in the library.

## **Children Left At Closing**

Parents and guardians are expected to know the opening and closing times of the library, bearing in mind that the time can and does change in case of emergencies.

1. Should it appear that a child has been left at the Library without a ride or assistance home 15 minutes before closing time, an attempt will be made by library staff to contact a family member or caregiver. Every attempt will be made to contact an adult or a family member via work, home and cellular phone. Staff is NOT permitted to remain after closing time with a child or to give him/her a ride home.

2. If an adult or family member cannot be reached and the child is alone at closing time, the Mansfield Police will be contacted to continue efforts to contact the parents. Staff will remain with the child until the police have arrived. If the police have picked up the child, a staff member will post a note on the door advising the parent/guardian of the circumstances and stating where the parent/guardian can locate the child. The Library director will be notified and he/she will contact the parent/guardian to explain the policy and why the action was required.

**The Mansfield Public Library assumes no responsibility for children of any age left unattended in the library.**