

Library Policy for Children

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 9 must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or caregiver 14 years or older while in the library. Parents or caregivers are responsible for the conduct of children visiting the library. Children need to display appropriate behavior and their conduct cannot interfere with other people's ability to use the library.
- Children ages 9-11 may be in the youth room with a parent or caregiver elsewhere in the library.
- Patrons age 12+ may be in the library on their own. However, they are the legal responsibility of their parent/guardian and should have an emergency contact available. They also should be made aware of library policies and library hours.
- The library cannot assume responsibility for children of any age while a parent/caregiver is participating in a library program or other activity in the library. Staff members are unable to watch children for parents or caregivers.
- Parents or caregivers are responsible for supervising the materials their child is allowed to borrow or use in the library. The library does not monitor library materials children choose, nor does it limit the children's access to any materials available at 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 needs to be made by the child to contact a family member or caregiver. Every attempt should be made to contact an adult or a family member. 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.