

# **UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY**

Person Responsible: Library Supervisors

Last Updated: 2/7/09

**Purpose:** The Aurora Public Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for customers of all ages. Sharing this environment with other people requires that everyone follow the Aurora Public Library Customer Rights and Responsibilities policy available in brochure format at each library building and on the Library website.

The Aurora Public Library wants children to use its facilities and services. Young children in the library should always be accompanied by a parent/guardian or assigned caregiver. When children are left alone they may become frightened or anxious. They will be among many strangers. If they wander through the building they may encounter hazards such as stairs, doors, furniture or electrical equipment. They may also become bored and restless and could disturb the enjoyment and work of others.

The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern of the library staff. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with library personnel. Library employees cannot be responsible for children who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior. The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of young library users.

## Children under the age of 8:

1. Children under the age of 8 must have a responsible parent/caregiver (the caregiver must be aged 12 or over) in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child, except for children attending a library program without a parent/caregiver in the room. However, the parent/caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.
2. If a child under the age of 8 is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library and inform him/her of the rules. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended again, the police will be called for assistance. If police are called, library staff will document what happened in the City of Aurora's Incident/Accident Report form and promptly route the report to Library administration.
3. If a child under the age of 8 violates the "Customer Rights and Responsibilities" or "Disruptive Customers" policy, the child and the parent/caregiver will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the family can be asked to leave the library pursuant to the "Disruptive Customers" policy.

## Children 8 and older:

1. Children 8 and older may use the library on their own except during regular school hours. (See Truancy, Home Schooled Students, below.) However, parents/guardians are still responsible for the actions, safety, and well-being of their child(ren.) Children who violate the "Customer Rights and Responsibilities" or "Disruptive Customers" policy will be informed of the rules and may be asked to leave the library pursuant to the "Disruptive Customers" policy. Children of this age should have the ability to enter and leave the library at will. If a child in this age group is not able to leave the library without an adult, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that he/she is not in the library alone to begin with. This is a particular concern in inclement weather, after dark, and at closing. All children should have the telephone number of an emergency contact.

## Truancy:

The Aurora Public Library will do its best to work with local school districts to prevent truancy. In cases of suspected truancy, children may be asked to verify that they have permission to be out of school. The local school district, truancy officer, and/or parent may be called.

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