

Geauga County Public Library
Operating Policy Manual

SECTION: YOUTH SAFETY
SECTION NUMBER: 952
EFFECTIVE DATE: December 13, 1994
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The library welcomes youth to use its facilities and services. Responsibility for the behavior and well-being of children using the library rests with the parent (or guardian or Caregiver assigned by the parent) and not with the library's personnel.

Library staff members cannot supervise children in the library.

The safety of all children left alone in the library is a serious concern. Young children left on their own often become frightened or anxious.

PRESCHOOLERS – UNATTENDED

Children under the age of six years may not be left unattended by an adult in any part of the library. If children under the age of six are found without an adult, staff will attempt to locate the parent or other caregiver. IF the parent or caregiver cannot be located in the building or at home within 30 minutes, law enforcement personnel (police or sheriff's department) will be contacted to pick up the child.

PRESCHOOLERS – PROGRAMS

During story times or other programs, adults who do not attend the program with the child must remain in the building and must return to the story area by the end of the program.

PRESCHOOLERS – CLOSING TIME

If children under the age of six are found without an adult at closing time, staff will attempt to locate the parent or adult caregiver. If the parent or caregiver by located in the building or at home, law enforcement personnel (police or sheriff's department) will be contacted to pick up the child. Two library staff members will stay with the child after closing until the law enforcement personnel arrive.

YOUTH IN A PUBLIC PLACE

Due to differences in child development, some children 6 years and older may not be able to cope with being unattended. No public place, including the library, can guarantee the safety of children. Therefore, it is recommended that children between 6 and 10 years of age be accompanied by a parent or other caregiver when visiting the library.

During regular service hours, if library staff judges that any unattended child is not coping adequately, staff will attempt to locate a parent or caregiver to pick up the child. If the parent or caregiver cannot be contacted within 30 minutes, law enforcement personnel (police or sheriff's department) will be contacted for assistance.

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UNATTENDED YOUTH AT CLOSING

When visiting the library without an adult, children should have definite arrangements to be picked up by closing time. IF children are left unattended at closing, staff will call the parents or caregiver.

CONTACTING LAW ENFORCEMENT: UNATTENDED YOUTH AT CLOSING

The library staff will contact law enforcement personnel (police or sheriff) if staff are unable to reach parents or other caregivers by telephone.

The library staff will contact law enforcement personnel (police or sheriff) if staff are able to reach parents or other caregivers, but the parent or other caregiver are unable to pick up the child within 30 minutes after the library closes.

The library staff will contact law enforcement personnel (police or sheriff) if the parent or other caregiver first state that he or she can pick up the child within 30 minutes after closing but does not arrive at the library by that time.

NOTIFICATION FOR PARENTS

When police have been called, staff will leave a note on the door notifying the parent or caregiver, in case the law enforcement personnel pick up the child from the library. If necessary, two library staff members will stay with the child after closing. Staff members will use their judgment when dealing with unattended youth at closing.

Staff do not drive children home.

In any situation involving youth safety and specifically whenever parents (or other caregivers) or law enforcement personnel are contacted, staff will complete an Incident Report. In cases of serious violations of the Youth Safety policy, the Library will notify the Department of Human Services.

The Youth Safety policy is posted in each library.

Reviewed December 19, 2008
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