

Unattended Children

Children of all ages are welcome at the Springfield Public Library, and are encouraged to use library's materials and services and attend programs. However, the library is an open, public building, and the well-being of children left alone is serious concern. The library staff cannot guarantee absolute safety to everyone using the library. They cannot prevent children from interacting with or leaving the library with persons who are not appropriate caregivers. Unlike school personnel, the library staff does not act in loco parentis. Therefore, parents/guardians are responsible for the safety and behavior of the children in their care while in the library.

The Board of Trustees has established the following guidelines to ensure that children are safe while in the library:

1. Children **under the age of ten (10)** must be under direct supervision of a responsible guardian/caregiver aged **sixteen (16) or older**.
2. Children aged ten(10) and older may be left unattended for a reasonable period of time provided they observe proper conduct during the entirety of such time. In the event an unattended child violates Library Policy Section 702. LIBRARY CODE OF CONDUCT in a manner that requires expulsion from the library, library staff will attempt to contact parent/guardian or caregiver to apprise them of the situation. The parent/guardian or caregiver will be required to come to the library at that time to remove the child from the premises. After the parent/guardian or caregiver has been contacted, the child must be picked up within thirty (30) minutes. If a parent/guardian or caregiver cannot be located within thirty minutes, the staff will call Springfield Police Department to take charge of the child.
3. Children of any age with mental, physical or emotional problems that necessitate supervision must be continually accompanied by parent/guardian or caregiver.
4. A staff member who discovers unattended child under the age of ten (10) will attempt to contact the parent/guardian or caregiver of the child. After the parent/guardian or caregiver has been contacted, the child must be picked up within thirty (30) minutes. If a parent/guardian or caregiver cannot be located within thirty (30) minutes, the staff will call Springfield Police Department to take charge of the child.
5. When the library closes and it's dark outside, library staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian or caregiver of any unattended child under the age of fifteen (15). If a parent/guardian or caregiver cannot be located or contacted within fifteen (15) minutes, the staff will call Springfield Police Department to take charge of the child. Any such child not picked up within thirty (30) minutes of the library closing will be left in the care of the Springfield Police Department.

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 1, 2019

APPROVED: June 20, 2019