



<<POLICIES>>

UNATTENDED CHILDREN

Policy Statement:

Tredyffrin Township Libraries ("TTL") welcome and encourage visits from children; however, library staff members do not stand in the place of parents. Therefore, although staff members will always respond to unattended children with care and concern, they cannot assume responsibility for their safety or well-being. Parents or legal guardians are responsible for their children under 18 years old, regardless of whether or not they accompany them into the library. Sharing the library environment with other people requires that patrons of all ages follow TTL's Behavior Policy and Regulations.

- Children under the age of 6 years old must be accompanied by a parent or responsible caregiver who remains within sight and conversation distance of the child. A caregiver is an individual age 13 or older who is assuming responsibility for a younger child with the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian.
- Children between 6 and 8 years old need not be in the immediate presence of a parent or caregiver, but their caregiver must remain within the library building.
- Children age 9 and older who are able to follow TTL's Behavior Policy and Regulations may use the library unattended; otherwise, they should be adequately supervised by a parent or caregiver.
- Children of any age with special physical, mental or emotional needs which render supervision necessary shall be accompanied by a parent or caregiver at all times.

Library Programs:

- Children under 6 years old attending library programs without a parent or caregiver in the room are, for the duration of the program only, considered to be under the supervision of library staff and thus are not unattended. However, the parent/caregiver must remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.
- Children age 6 or older attending library programs are, for the duration of the program only, considered to be under the supervision of library staff and thus are not unattended. However, the parent/caregiver is expected to join the child at the end of the program.

Closing Time:

Staff will make a reasonable effort to assure that children leave the library safely at regular closing time or when the library is closing early due to inclement weather. If a parent, guardian or other caregiver cannot be located within the building or contacted by telephone, library staff is authorized to call the police department to ensure safe transport for the child to his or her home. Under no circumstance will a staff member give a child a ride home, take a child outside of the building or remain in the building alone with an unattended child.



Truancy:

According to Title 22 of the Pa. Code, Chapter 12.1: *Parents or guardians of all children between the ages of 8 and 17 are required by the compulsory attendance law to ensure that their children attend an approved educational institution, unless legally excused.*

As library staff members do not act *in loco parentis* (in place of parents), they are not required to report suspected truanancies. However, Tredyffrin Township Libraries will do their best to cooperate with schools, families and law enforcement agencies to uphold Pennsylvania laws regarding compulsory school attendance, as described in the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949.

Homeschooled Children:

In order to use the library alone during school hours, children who are ages 9 and up and are homeschooled will be required to have proof of their home school status, which includes emergency contact information. Additionally, the parent/guardian or school district may be contacted to confirm home school status. If the child has a Virtual School or other online ID, they may log into their account as proof of home school status.

Violation of This Policy:

If a child under 6 years old is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent or caregiver in the library. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended again, the police department will be called for assistance.

When the safety or well-being of a child age 6 or older is in doubt and a parent, guardian or other caregiver cannot be located within the building or contacted by telephone, library staff is authorized to call the police department for assistance.

When discussing violations of the Unattended Child Policy, library staff will provide a written copy of the policy to the parent or caregiver. A member of the public who violates the Unattended Child Policy will be subject to any of the following steps, depending on the severity of the violation:

- Asked to stop the behavior;
- Receive a verbal or written warning;
- Be banned from the library for one or more days;
- Be required to resolve the matter with assistance from social/family services and/or law enforcement.

All violations of this policy will be documented by staff using the Incident Report Form.

In the case of habitual violation of this policy, the Children's Librarian or Branch Manager will work with the Library Director to contact the parent or legal guardian in writing and follow up with social/family services.

Library users may appeal actions taken by library staff to enforce the Unattended Child Policy by submitting a written request to the Tredyffrin Township Libraries Board of Trustees; 582 Upper Gulph Road; Strafford, PA 19087.

*Adopted, March 24, 2011
Revised, August 24, 2023*