

STRATFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Unattended Children Policy

The Stratford Public Library welcomes children of all ages to use and enjoy everything the library has to offer while making every effort to provide a safe and pleasant environment for all our patrons. However, young children may not be safe when left unattended in the library. The staff cannot monitor whether children are leaving the building alone, with a parent/guardian, or with a stranger. Parents/guardians who leave children alone at the library are accepting this risk. Therefore, to keep children safe and make the library a comfortable place for everyone, please observe the following rules regarding unattended children:

- 1. The Stratford Public Library and its staff do not assume responsibility for any child left unattended in the library.**
2. Children under the age of **nine** may not be left unattended at the library unless that child is attending a library program that *specifically states* that participating children do not have to have a parent/guardian in attendance with them. A child is considered unattended if a parent/guardian or other authorized caregiver over the age of thirteen is not present with the child in the library.
3. At the discretion of a responsible adult, a child age nine to twelve may be left unattended for a period not to exceed one hour in order to select materials, complete a homework assignment, read, or attend a program.
4. All library patrons, including children, are subject to the library's Patron Behavior Policy concerning disruptive behavior. Parents/guardians are responsible for their child's behavior, even if they are not in the library with the child. **Library staff does not serve *in loco parentis*** (in place of the parent). If a child's behavior is inappropriate, and s/he does not respond to guidance from library staff, an attempt will be made to reach a parent/guardian to come remove the child from the library. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached and the child's behavior is deemed dangerous or unduly disruptive, library staff may call for the assistance of law enforcement.
5. If a parent/guardian of a child cannot be contacted when necessary or if a child is left without a way home at closing time, the library staff will call law enforcement to take custody of the child.
6. Children over age thirteen may use the library as adults provided they follow the Stratford Public Library's Patron Behavior Policy.

Approved by the Stratford Public Library Board of Trustees on April 8, 2016