

Unattended Child Policy

Revised 3/23/17

The Henry County Public Library welcomes all children to use our facilities and services. We must also state, however, that responsibility for children using the library rests with the parent or guardian and not with library personnel. The library is a public space and is therefore open to all members of the public. The library does not act in *loco parentis*. Staff members cannot monitor everyone who enters or exits the building and all adult patrons are free to access any public area within the building. Staff members cannot be placed in a position of supervising children who are too young to be unattended or whose behavior indicates that they have stayed at the library for too long a time.

Parents are advised that, if their child or children misbehave, they may be told to leave the library and its grounds. Parents must also realize that they are legally responsible for their children's actions and behavior, even in their absence. For the safety and protection of youth and for the benefit of all, the Henry County Public Library has developed the following rules:

1. Children under age 6: Children in this age group should always be directly supervised by the parent, guardian, or caregiver responsible for their safety. Direct supervision implies that the child is within the range of sight of the responsible party.
2. Children ages 6 to 8: Children in this age group should always be directly supervised by the parent, guardian, or caregiver responsible for their safety. Direct supervision implies that the child is within the sight or sound range of the responsible party.
3. Children ages 9 to 12: Children in this age group may be unattended for limited periods of time as long as they abide by the library's Rules of Conduct. If a child under age 13 is in need of supervision and no parent, guardian, or caregiver can be located in the building or otherwise contacted, library staff may notify the police.
4. Children at least 13 years of age or in high school: Children in this age group may be unattended as long as they abide by the library's Rules of Conduct. If a child in this age group is in need of supervision and no parent, guardian, or caregiver can be located in the building or otherwise contacted, library staff may notify the police.
5. Caregivers must fulfill the following criteria:
 - a. Must be at least 13 years of age
 - b. Must be able to effectively supervise children, as determined by the library staff
 - c. Must be willing and able to provide contact information for a parent or guardian upon request

6. All children must leave the library at closing time.
 - a. Staff members are not responsible for the safety of a child on library property once the library has closed.
 - b. Under no circumstances will a staff member provide a child a ride home.
 - c. In the event that a child 8 years old or under is left at the library at closing time without a caregiver the following actions will take place:
 - i. Staff members will attempt to contact the parent(s) or guardian(s).
 - ii. If the attempts are unsuccessful, the police will be summoned to assist the child.
7. Library staff will use their discretion and judgment in application of the policy.