



## Unattended Minor's Policy

### **Unattended Minor's Policy**

The Trustees and Staff of the DeWitt Community Library strive to provide an inviting environment for library users of all ages to enjoy. We encourage children and families to visit our facility, to take advantage of the resources available and to develop a love of reading and libraries.

The safety and welfare of minors at the library is of the utmost importance. Young children should be supervised by age appropriate, responsible parties. Parents and caregivers are responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behavior of their children during their visit to the Library. The Library Board and staff respect the rights and privacy of all library patrons. Library staff will intervene only when minors are left unattended or problems of safety, disruptive behavior, or well-being occurs. Library staff will follow established library procedure for the protection of the minor or to maintain an environment free from disruption in accordance with the Frances Banta Waggoner Rules of Conduct policy.

### **Unattended Children in the Library**

1. An unattended child is a minor 17 years old and younger whose behavior requires them to be accompanied by a parent or a caregiver.
2. The library does not have staff, staff training, or State Certification to act as a childcare facility
3. The library staff is not responsible for the care of unattended minors and does not assume responsibility from the parents or caregivers for providing welfare for their children.
4. Library staff is not responsible for minors interacting with or leaving the library with persons who are not appropriate caregivers.
5. Library staff may refer to the police those minors who are left unattended in the library when a parent/guardian cannot be reached or if the behavior of the minor child falls well outside that of acceptable behavior in the library.
6. Due to safety and privacy concerns, the Library staff will not "page" or seek out children in the library for anyone who calls the library looking for their child.
7. Minors can use the library's telephone only in the case of emergencies.

### **Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities**

1. Parents/Caregivers must remain with their young children and be responsible for the care of their children on library property.
2. Parents with minors who are mature enough to be left alone at the library are expected to set reasonable time limits for their children's visits to the library and provide a means of transportation home from the library and by the time the library closes.
3. Encourage positive behavior by their minors while visiting the library facility.

4. Cooperate with the library staff if their juvenile's behavior is disruptive to staff or other library patrons, causes damage to property, or endangers their personal safety or the safety of other library patrons or staff members.

**Staff Guidelines:**

1. Staff will use these guidelines for addressing lost/unattended children or those with conduct issues on a case-by-case basis.
2. Staff will attempt to locate the child's parent, guardian, or caregiver in the library.
3. In some cases, if the parent or responsible guardian cannot be found or contacted by phone, the proper authorities will be notified.
4. Staff will not take children out of the building unless parents are located within sight of the facility.
5. An incident report will be filled out and given to the Library Director and kept on record
6. For the safety of a child left unattended in the library at closing, appropriate law enforcement authorities will be contacted to take custody of the child.
7. Staff will wait 15 minutes after closing before this measure is taken.

**Discipline of disruptive children**

1. In case of a minor disruption, the patron receives two warnings. At the third offense, the patron must leave the Library for the rest of the day.
2. In the case of any misconduct that, in the judgment of a staff member, is extreme, the offender will be told to leave the building immediately, or the police may be called as appropriate.
3. Patrons who engage in repeated disruptive behaviors that interfere with other library customers use of the Library, or who engage in behaviors that violate City Code or State Statutes, may be temporarily or permanently banned from the Library premises by the Director.
4. To reinstate library privileges the parent and child or offending adult must make arrangements to meet with the Library Director to discuss the situation.

Approved 7/6/04

Revisions approved 2/12/2008

Reviewed and approved 10/2/2012

Revised and approved 02/07/2018

Logo and library name updated 11/21/2020