Hamden Public Library

Unattended Children Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the supervision and safety of children while using the Library. It defines the responsibilities of parents, guardians, and caregivers, establishes age-appropriate supervision requirements, and outlines procedures for addressing situations involving unattended children. The policy is intended to promote a safe and welcoming library environment while ensuring that children are appropriately supervised.

Policy Statement

The Library welcomes children and families and strives to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all patrons. The library cannot guarantee the security of unattended children and does not provide childcare. Responsibility for the welfare and behavior of children using the library rests with the parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver.

In accordance with the Conn Gen. Stat. 53-21a, the Library adheres to the following policy to address children's safety while in the library:

- **Children under the age of six must have a responsible adult within sight at all times**, including while in the Children's Area. Children under six may not be left unattended in the Children's Room while a parent, guardian, or caregiver visits another area of the Library. The child must accompany the adult when the adult leaves the Children's Room.

- **Children under the age of 12 may not be left unattended in the Library.** A parent, guardian, or responsible adult caregiver must remain with and supervise children under 12.

- **Children age 12 and older may use the Library unaccompanied by a responsible adult,** provided they are able to safely care for themselves, follow Library rules, and respond appropriately in an emergency.

- **A child who is permitted to use the Library independently may not be left in charge of younger siblings or other children**. A minor is not considered a responsible adult caregiver for younger children. Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for ensuring that children who require supervision are accompanied by an appropriate responsible adult.

- Parents and caregivers are expected to be aware of the Library's opening and closing times and understand that Library operating hours may change unexpectedly.

    - Parents and caregivers are responsible for making appropriate arrangements for their children before the Library closes.
    - If the child is still waiting when the Library closes, the police must be notified. A library staff member will remain with the child until the police arrive.

CT Gen Stat § 53-21a. (a)(1) Any parent, guardian or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, of any child under the age of twelve years who knowingly leaves such child unsupervised in a place of public accommodation or a motor vehicle for a period of time that presents a substantial risk to the child's health or safety, shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

Approved by the Library Board 11/10/2026