

Policy No.: P16

Policy Title: Unattended Child

Date Originated: October 2024

Date Last Reviewed/Revised: June 2026

Point of Contact: Director, Engagement & Client Experience

POLICY STATEMENT

The Library is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment for children and families. While Library staff strive to create a positive experience for all customers, the Library is a public space and staff cannot assume responsibility for the supervision, safety, or well-being of children left unattended on Library premises.

This policy establishes the responsibilities of parents, guardians, caregivers, and Library staff regarding children who are unattended in the Library.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all children using Library facilities, services, programs, and events, whether held on Library property or at Library-sponsored off-site locations.

DEFINITIONS

Caregiver

- A parent, guardian, sibling, relative, or other responsible person who has assumed responsibility for the care of a child.

Child

- A person under the age of ten (10)

Unattended Child

- A child left without appropriate supervision by a caregiver while on Library premises.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. Caregiver Responsibility

The responsibility for the welfare, supervision, and behavior of children rests with the parent, guardian, or caregiver and not with Library staff.

Caregivers are expected to:

- Monitor the whereabouts of children in their care.
- Ensure children comply with Library policies and the Code of Conduct as part of the Welcoming Policy.
- Be available to respond immediately if contacted by Library staff.
- Arrange transportation and pickup before Library closing time.

2. Children under the age of nine (9)

- Children under nine (9) years of age must be accompanied and directly supervised by a responsible caregiver who remains in the Library.

3. Children Attending Programs

- Children attending Library programs must meet any supervision requirements established for the specific program.
- Unless otherwise stated, caregivers of children under nine (9) years of age must remain in the Library during the program.

4. Child Protection Concerns

- Library staff have a duty to report reasonable concerns regarding the safety or protection of a child in accordance with applicable legislation. Where appropriate, staff may contact child protection authorities or police services.

5. Closing Time

- All children must be picked up before Library closing time.
- If a child remains unattended at closing and reasonable efforts to contact a caregiver are unsuccessful, Library staff may contact Durham Regional Police or Durham Children's Aid Society.

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- Unattended Child Procedure
- The Rights of Children & Teens in the Library Policy

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.
Please speak to Library staff for assistance.