

# Unattended Child Policy

Haston Library is dedicated to providing a safe and welcoming environment for customers of all ages. In an effort to provide patrons of all ages unrestricted use of the Haston Library, its collections, and services in a safe manner, the Library Board of Trustees has adopted a policy statement concerning unattended children.

(...concerning persons of vulnerable, populations including unattended children) Responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of children using the library rests with the parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver. Library staff will always respond with care and concern; however they cannot assume responsibility for children's safety or comfort when they are unattended, nor be responsible for children who are demonstrating inappropriate behavior.

Therefore:

1. It is reasonable for Library staff to assume that any child who enters the library unattended is doing so with parental knowledge and consent; such children will be allowed to freely use library materials, collections and services in an unrestricted manner, as well as be permitted to leave the library at will.
2. Children who are able to maintain proper library behavior may use the library unattended, provided they are not disruptive to other patrons or staff members, otherwise they should be adequately supervised by a parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver.
3. Persons of any age who demonstrate behaviors that require additional supervision may be asked to have an appropriate guardian accompany them during their visit.
4. During regular service hours, if Library staff judge that any unattended youth is not coping adequately or is behaving in a disruptive manner, staff will remind child(ren) of expected library behavior. If inappropriate behaviors continue, staff may:
  - a. immediately ask the child(ren) to leave the library, regardless of adult supervision
  - b. notify parents, guardians, or responsible caregivers, either immediately by phone or in writing within 10 business days, that the child(ren) need additional supervision;
  - c. contact authorities such as the Police either to assist with the enforcement of discipline in the library or to ensure the safety of an unattended child.

When visiting the Library without an adult, all children should have definite arrangements to be picked up by closing time. Children who are deemed unable to leave the library unattended (at closing or otherwise) should not be visiting the library without proper supervision. If children are left unattended at closing, staff will attempt to notify the parents or caregiver, however if parents cannot be reached, library staff will not be required to remain longer than 30 minutes past closing. At the discretion of library staff, local police may be notified to request safe transport for children who are left unattended after closing.

If, at any time the library must close early or be evacuated due to unforeseeable circumstances (ie weather emergencies, natural disasters, medical emergencies, etc) library staff will make reasonable attempts to notify a parent, guardian or emergency contact in order to arrange pick-up, however library staff will not be responsible for arranging for transportation. If your child(ren) regularly visit the library without supervision, you are encouraged to leave emergency contact information.

At no time should library staff transport patrons.