

Unattended Child Policy

The Haston Library is dedicated to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all visitors.

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. 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 maintain proper library behavior and are not disruptive to other patrons or staff members may use the library unattended.
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. If library staff judge that any unattended child is not coping adequately or is behaving in a disruptive manner while at the library, staff will remind the child of expected library behavior. If inappropriate behaviors continue, staff may:
 - a. immediately ask the child 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 needs additional supervision;
 - c. contact authorities such as law enforcement either to assist with maintaining order 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, authorities such as law enforcement may be notified to request safe transport for children who are left unattended after closing.

If the library must close early or be evacuated due to unforeseeable circumstances (such as weather emergencies, natural disasters, or medical emergencies) 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, and at no time should library staff transport patrons.

If a child regularly visits the library without supervision, the parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver is encouraged to leave emergency contact information with library staff.