

SUBJECT: Unattended Children

BOARD

Approved: 05/16/2013

Revised: 07/20/2023

POLICY

The Rolla Public Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for patrons of all ages. Sharing this environment with other people requires that everyone follow Library policies established by Library Board of Trustees and posted in each library building and on the library website.

The Rolla Public Library encourages children to use its facilities and services. Children in the library must always be accompanied by a parent/guardian or assigned caregiver that is at least 16 years of age.

The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern of the library staff. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with the library personnel. Library employees cannot be responsible for children who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior. The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of young library users.

1. Children under the age of 8 must have a parent/caregiver in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child. Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. The assigned caregiver must be a responsible person and must carry emergency contact information. An exception would be children attending a library program without a parent/caregiver in the room. However, the parent/caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.
2. If a child in this age group is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library and inform him/her of the rules. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended again, the police will be called for assistance.
3. If a parent or guardian is concerned about unlimited access to the library and its materials for children between the ages of 12 and 17, they should accompany their child to the library. It is not the responsibility of the library, its Board of Trustees, staff or volunteers, to determine what item in the library collection is suitable for an individual. If a parent or guardian would like to assure that their child has limited access, they should not provide a library card for their minor and they should accompany their child on library visits.