



UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY

We are glad your children are here! We want the Starke County Public Library System's libraries to be welcoming, educational and safe places for your child.

Parents, teachers, childcare workers, babysitters:

- Library staff CANNOT ensure the safety or care of unattended children.
- If you bring children to the library, you are responsible for each child's behavior and well-being, while such children are on library property, including travel to and from Library property.
- If you are in charge of a group of children of any age, you must stay with them and ensure their behavior and well-being while they are in the library.
- Parents dropping off children outside the library should first ensure the library is open. The library is not necessarily open to the public when there are lights on in the building.

A public building is not a safe environment for a crawling baby or a toddler. To avoid injury, children under the age of five must be in close proximity (within sight) of an adult responsible for their safety.

School-aged children, grades K-5, may use the library unattended, when not attending a program or meeting, from 2:30PM-5PM; as long as their conduct remains appropriate.

School age students, grade 6-12, may use the Library unattended for any length of time as long as their conduct remains appropriate.

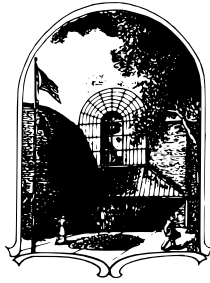
If an unattended child is being disruptive, is deemed to be at risk of harm, becomes ill, or when weather causes the Library to close, an effort will be made to locate the responsible parent, guardian, or caregiver (through phone book, library records, etc.) and the policy will be explained to them. When contact efforts fail, the appropriate law enforcement or child protective authorities will be notified to take custody of the child.

Parents attending meetings on the library property whether sponsored by an outside group or the library must either:

- Leave their children at home;
- Keep their children with them in the meeting, or

Starke County Public Library System

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- Have their children adequately supervised by an accompanying adult outside of the meeting or workshop.

Adults who use the library's computers are responsible for supervising any children in their care. Adults may borrow books, toys, and puzzles from the children's department to entertain their children while the adult uses the computers.

The Starke County Public Library System assumes no responsibility for children left unattended at the Library after hours. Unattended children (under the age of 16) who are present at the Library 15 minutes before the Library closes will be asked to phone a parent or responsible adult to pick them up.

Staff should make the child aware that if not picked up by closing time, they will need to wait outside the building until picked up. Staff members (at least 2) will wait with the child, outside the building until a parent or responsible adult arrives to pick up the child. If a parent or responsible adult has not picked the child up within 15 minutes of the Library closing, the Library staff will call the police department to come pick up the child. Parents or the responsible adult will need to retrieve their child at the police station.

Under no circumstances will a staff member transport a child in their own vehicle.

Staff should fill out an Incident Report form detailing any incidents concerning unattended children left in the Library, and submit it to the Library Director no later than the next business day.

Adopted by the Starke County Public Library Board of Trustees 4/10/12; amended 4/9/2019