

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY

- A. This policy refers to minors using the Main Library, Hope Branch, Bookmobile.
- B. The staff of the Bartholomew County Public Library is concerned about the safety and well-being of all its library users.
 - 1. All children are welcomed and encouraged to use the library collections.
 - 2. Programs are created especially for children to encourage lifelong appreciation of books and other resources.
- C. In all situations, the parent/guardian/caregiver who brings a minor child to the library property, whether indoors or outdoors, is responsible for the care and safety of the child.
 - 1. Library staff member cannot monitor the location and behavior of each child on the library property.
 - 2. Library staff members cannot assume parental responsibilities for children who are in the library.
 - 3. Library staff cannot monitor or control all behavior or whereabouts of people using the library and cannot assure the safety of an unattended child.
 - 4. Parents are encouraged to talk to the children's librarian if they have questions or want additional information regarding this policy.
- D. A child under the age of eight (8) years must be accompanied by a parent or adult caregiver at all times while in the library.
 - 1. A parent/guardian/care giver may not leave the child unattended in Children's Services while using any other area of the library or attending a meeting.
- E. Children ages eight (8) years and older may use the library unattended so long as they are engaged in activities associated with the use of a public library.
 - 1. Adult caregivers are encouraged not to leave children of ages 8 to 11 years for more than one hour unattended.
- F. If a child has been left unattended at the library and wishes to return home on his or her own, a staff member will permit the child to telephone a parent/guardian.
- G. The parent/guardian is responsible for arriving to transport the unaccompanied minor home at closing time.
 - 1. The child will be given a chance to call home for a ride 10 minutes before the library closes.
 - 2. If the parent/guardian cannot be located, two staff members will either allow the child to remain at the library under close supervision or will contact local law enforcement authorities.
 - 3. A child left at the library for more than 10 minutes after closing is considered to be an abandoned child, and the police department will be contacted.
 - a. The police officer will be asked to provide transport to the police department until the police can locate a parent/guardian.
 - 4. At least two staff members will remain with and supervise the child.

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UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY (continued)

4. A library staff member will not take an unaccompanied child outside of the library building, even at the request of the parent/guardian.
 5. A library staff member will not transport an unaccompanied child to another location, even at the request of the parent/guardian.
- H. If an unattended minor is injured at the library, a staff member will contact the parent/guardian and call 911 as needed.
1. If the parent/guardian cannot be located, the library staff member will contact the police to report the situation.
- I. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated
1. If an unattended minor is asked to leave the library due to disruptive behavior, the parent/guardian will not be contacted to report a first offense.
 2. The child has the option to telephone the parent/guardian to report that he/she has been asked to leave the library.
 3. The parent/guardian may be contacted by a library staff member to report subsequent instances of disruptive behavior.
 4. Repeated disruptive behavior may lead to a 6 month ban from the library.
 - a. In the case of such a ban, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian to notify him/her of this situation.
- J. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:
1. Loud, abusive, aggressive, harassing or obscene language or behavior.
 2. Defacing or damaging library materials, furniture, or other property.
 3. Using or distributing illegal drugs.
 4. Circumventing or attempting to circumvent in the library security system.
 5. Tampering with, altering, editing, or damaging computer hardware or software.
 6. Using roller blades, roller skates, skate boards, or other sports equipment in the library or on library property.
 7. Entering unauthorized workspaces or office areas.
 8. Playing audio equipment so that others can hear it.
 9. Running through the aisles or blocking the aisles so that access to the library materials and services are prevented.
 10. Eating, drinking, or smoking in the building.