

# **Princeton Library Unattended and Disruptive Child Policy**

The Princeton Public Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for customers of all ages. Sharing this environment with other people requires that everyone follow The Library Code of Customer Conduct established by the Library Board of Directors and posted in the Library building and on the Library website.

The Princeton Public Library wants children to use its facilities and services. Children in the Library should always be accompanied by a parent/guardian or assigned caregiver. The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern.

## **The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with the library personnel.**

The staff cannot know if children are leaving the building with parents or with strangers. Library employees cannot be responsible for children who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior. It is not the library's intention to seek out unattended children, but rather to have a reasoned response prepared when a problem presents itself. For the protection and well-being of children who visit the library, the following policy has been established.

An unattended child is defined as any child under the age of 12 using the public library and facilities unaccompanied by a parent or responsible caregiver.

### **Unattended children when Library is open**

Children under the age of 6 may not be left unattended in any part of the library. If children under the age of six are found without an adult, library staff will attempt to locate the parent or caregiver.

Children ages 6-9 must have a parent or caregiver in the building with them at all times during a library visit. If children 6-9 are found without an adult, staff will attempt to locate the parent or caregiver.

Children ages 10-12 are welcome to use the library unattended but should not be left alone for extended periods of time. No public place, including the library, can guarantee the safety of children. Parents are responsible for their behavior. If a child becomes anxious or disruptive, the staff will attempt to locate the parent or caregiver in the library. If they are not available the staff will call the child's home. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to be accessible to pick up the child at any time. If the parent of a disruptive child is not available to pick up the child, the Princeton Police Department will be called to escort the child to his/her home.

Children 13 and over are old enough to use the library responsibly. If problems arise, they may be asked to leave and/or parents may be contacted. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to be accessible to pick up the child.

**MEMBERS OF THE STAFF CANNOT DRIVE CHILDREN HOME.**

**STAFF WILL FILL OUT AN INCIDENT REPORT.**

The parent or guardian is responsible for arriving to transport the unaccompanied child home at closing time.

1. The child will be given a chance to call home for a ride 30 minutes before the library closes.
2. If the parent or guardian cannot be located, two staff members will allow the child to remain at the library under close supervision.
3. A child left at the library for more than 30 minutes after closing is considered to be an abandoned child and the Princeton Police Department will be contacted. The police officer will be asked to provide transport to the police department until the police can locate a parent or guardian.

4. A library staff member will not take an unaccompanied child outside of the building, even at the request of the parent/guardian.

If an unattended minor is injured at the library, a staff member will contact the parent/guardian and call 911 as needed. If the parent/guardian cannot be located, the library staff member will contact the police to report the situation.

STAFF WILL FILL OUT AN INCIDENT REPORT.

Disruptive behavior cannot be tolerated.

1. If an unattended minor is asked to leave the library due to disruptive behavior, the parent or guardian will 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 week ban from the library. In case of such a ban, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian to notify him/her of the situation. In the event of continued disruptive behavior, the staff is to call the Princeton Police Department.

Disruptive behavior includes but is not limit 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 and drinking in areas other than the coffee shop.
11. Smoking in the building or library property.

Adopted by the Library Board of Directors 2-10-11 UDCP