UNATTENDED CHILDREN

Pettigrew Regional Libraries welcome the use of its facilities by children of all ages. Our services and programs are offered to make the library enticing to children, to encourage them to visit the library and to develop a love of books, reading and libraries.

Busy public buildings are not secure places for children to be left alone. The Library Board of Trustees asserts that it is in the parents’ responsibility for the conduct of their minor children in the library and on library grounds, whether or not the parent or parents are present. The library staff will not assume responsibility for the care and safety of children in the library, other than to enforce the rules of conduct. Minor children should not be left unattended for extended periods of time.

If, on repeated occasions, library staff members have cause to notice unattended children, of any age, with no observable intent to use the library’s resources or are violating the rules of conduct in the library, they will be asked to leave the premises. According to Pettigrew Regional Library policy on “Problem Patrons”, a letter explaining the Library Board’s position on this matter will be sent to their parents.

When a child must be sent from the library repeatedly, because of unacceptable behavior or the conduct is grievous, his/her parent or parents may be informed by the Librarian that he/she must be accompanied by a parent or guardian on future trips to the library. If the child whose parents have been so notified returns to the library unaccompanied, the child will be considered to be trespassing and will be told to leave immediately. If the child refuses to leave, the Librarian will contact the proper authorities.

If a child is unattended by a responsible person, when it is time for the library to close, Library Staff will verify that the child has a plan for getting home, or will make any telephone call necessary to arrange for the child’s safe transportation home. If no arrangement has been verified, and no one has come for the child by 15 minutes after closing time, Library Staff will call the local police department or social services and will remain with the child until he/she is delivered into the care of his/her family or the authorities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to inform parents and guardians that the Library does not assume responsibility for their children and to provide the guidelines used by staff in the event that a child is left unattended in the library.

LEVELS OF SUPERVISION REQUIRED

- Children under the age of three must always be in close proximity and within sight of the adult responsible for their safety.
Pettigrew Regional Library
Service Policy

- Children under the age of ten must be supervised by a parent or responsible caregiver, age 14, or over, at all times while in the library. Parents of caregivers must remain in the library facility. A child may attend a program in the room by him/herself, however the caregiver must be ready to meet that child promptly when the program ends or have made arrangements clear with the child regarding leaving the library on their own or with a designated caregiver. Staff does not monitor the arrival or departure of any child from a program or the building. The Library does not have a public phone, or allow the use of cell phones inside the facility.

- Children ten and older may be left unattended, providing they are mature enough to follow library rules and observe proper conduct. Such children are subject to the same rules of behavior as other patrons and the same consequences, including being asked to leave the library. Staff does not monitor the arrival or departure of any child from a program or the building.

- Children between the ages of ten and thirteen years may be left unattended for a maximum of two hours.

- Children, of any age, with mental, physical or emotional disabilities, which affect decision-making skills or render supervision necessary must be accompanied by a parent, or caregiver, at all times.

Approved by the Pettigrew Regional Board
March 24, 2014