

<b>Title</b>	<b>Unattended Children</b>
<b>Prepared by</b>	Policy Committee, July 2008
<b>Date Approved</b>	March 8, 2010; 03/10/2014
<b>Amendment Prepared by:</b>	Policy Committee 2/24/14 Reviewed by Board March 2020

**PURPOSE:** An unattended child is a child, under the age of 18, who is apparently unaccompanied by an adult. Parents, guardians, teachers and caregivers may not leave children alone or in the care of other children who are unable or unwilling to provide adequate care.

The Scott Township Public Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment to patrons of all ages. Sharing this environment with other people requires that everyone follow the **Patron Behavior Policy** established by the **Library Board of Trustees**.

The Scott Township 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. A caregiver must be at least 16 years of age and is approved by the Librarian at the Circulation Desk.

**The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with library personnel.** Library employees cannot be responsible for children who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior. Library staff cannot prevent children from interacting with or leaving with persons who are not the appropriate chaperone.

#### **STATEMENT OF POLICY:**

The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of young library users:

##### **1. Children up to and including age 10:**

- a. Must have a parent/guardian/caregiver within physical touching distance and visual contact with the child. 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/guardian/caregiver in the room. However, the parent/guardian/caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.
- b. 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.
- c. If a child in this age group violates the **Patron Behavior Policy**, the child and the parent/caregiver will be informed of the rules by library staff. If inappropriate behavior continues, the family may be asked to leave the library.

2. **Children 11 – 17 may:**

- a. Use the Library unattended for an amount of time appropriate to their age and maturity. However, parents are still responsible for the actions and the well-being of their child(ren).
- b. Children using inappropriate behavior, or in violation of the **Patron Behavior Policy**, may be asked to leave the library.
- c. **If a child in this age group is not able to leave the library without an adult, he/she should not be in the library alone.**
- d. This is a particular concern in inclement weather and after dark. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

3. **At closing time:** If at closing time (normal closing time or for emergency reasons) an unattended minor (under age 18) remains at the library, the Library Staff will first attempt to locate the parent or legal guardian. If the parent / guardian cannot be reached the staff will then contact the police by calling 911.

- a. Two (2) staff members will remain with the minor until the parent / guardian or police arrive.
- b. Under no circumstances will library staff transport any minor in their personal car or library vehicle.
- c. All such incidents must be documented, and the Director notified immediately.