

Hoboken Public Library

Unattended Youth Policy

The Hoboken Public Library encourages children of all ages to visit the library and hopes that they will find it a friendly and inviting place to be. Programs and resources are offered to make the library a fun place for children to develop a lifelong love of reading and learning. The Library, however, is a public place open to all. It is not equipped - nor is it the Library staff's role- to provide long- or short- term child care.

The Library is prohibited from functioning as a child care center unless licensed as such. Furthermore, staff cannot know whether children are with caregivers or strangers. Out of concern for the safety and well-being of children, the Library has created the following policy to guide parents and staff about children's library use.

1. The responsibility for the care, safety and behavior of children using the Library rests with the parent, caregiver or designated guardian, whether they are present or not.
2. Children 9 years of age and younger must be accompanied and supervised by a caregiver (age 16 or older) at all times while in the Library. If a child is found unattended, staff will try to locate the parent, caregiver or designated guardian in the building. If one cannot be found, staff will call the phone number associated with the child's library card. If no contact is made, the Hoboken Police Department will be called to pick up the child.
3. Children age 10 and over may be in the Library without an adult. They are expected to obey the Patron Code of Conduct. If a child is not following the Patron Code of Conduct, the Library may ask the child to leave and/or contact the child's parents or guardians.
4. All children are encouraged to have contact information for a responsible caregiver in case of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, Library staff will attempt to contact that child's caregiver.
5. Teachers, daycare providers, or other youth leaders may not leave groups of students unattended in the Library regardless of the age of the students.
6. A child of any age who has a medical condition that requires monitoring by another individual must not be left alone in the library. A responsible parent, guardian or caregiver must be in attendance in the same department of the library as the child and must maintain an awareness of the child or teen's location and activity.
7. For the general health and safety of our patrons and staff, any child who is ill is asked to forgo coming to the Library unattended.
8. Children ages 10-17 who are home schooled and want to use the Library alone during public school hours must have a letter from their parent/guardian stating that the child is home schooled and containing emergency contact information. The Library reserves the right to contact the parent/guardian to confirm home school status.

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Unattended Youth at Closing Time

The Library closes promptly at the posted closing times. Parents should be aware of the Library's hours and keep in mind that those hours may change due to holiday schedules or reasons out of the control of staff, such as power outage, inclement weather, or an emergency. Children should know what to do should this occur.

1. If a child is alone at closing time, staff will attempt to call the parent, legal guardian or designated caregiver. If no one can be reached on the first attempt, staff will contact the Hoboken Police Department.
2. Two staff members will remain with the child until law enforcement arrives. Staff will wait 10 minutes after closing before contacting the Hoboken Police Department.

Adopted at the Hoboken Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting on January 26, 2021