



New Woodstock Free Library

Unattended Children Policy

The New Woodstock Free Library strives to provide a safe, comfortable environment for users of all ages. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of unattended children in our facility. All library users, regardless of age, must conduct themselves lawfully and follow the Patron Code of Conduct. Library staff are not licensed care providers and cannot take the place of parents or guardians. **Parents or guardians are ultimately responsible for the conduct of minor children (under 18 years of age) in the Library or on Library grounds, regardless of whether they accompany their children or not.**

- Children under the age of 8 must have a parent, guardian, or caregiver within sight or conversation distance unless the child is participating in a formal Library program. If the child is participating in a formal Library program, a parent, guardian, or caregiver must remain in the building and should join the child immediately when the program is completed.
- Children ages 8 –17 may use the Library unattended. Library staff will inform apparently unattended children behaving disruptively or inappropriately of the rules. If the disruptive or inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be asked to leave the Library.
- Parents/guardians/caregivers will be notified of misbehavior of their child. Library staff cannot act *in loco parentis* for any reason.

In the event that an unattended child is in distress (crying or visibly upset) or an unattended child under the age of 8 is discovered in the Library, staff will make every effort to contact the child's parent, guardian, or caregiver. If staff are not able to reach a parent, guardian or caregiver, the police will be called. The police officer will reunite the child with their parent, guardian, or caregiver. The officer will be given a copy of the Unattended Child Policy to give to the child's parent, guardian, or caregiver. Under no circumstances will Library staff be able to give the child a ride home.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees on January 28, 2021.