

Child Behavior and Supervision Policy

Revised May 22, 2012

The Library has a responsibility to provide an environment that is safe and comfortable for all library users who are appropriately using its services and facilities. Service to children is an important part of the Library's mission.

The Library is free and open to unaccompanied children who are independent enough to use the resources for recreation, information, and education.

The following policy has been designed to communicate the Library Board's concern for the safety and welfare of the children it serves.

Any children under the age of 12 should have a responsible family member or caregiver in the building while the child is using the Library.

If a child is not able to leave the Library unaccompanied by an adult, he/she should not be in the Library without an adult.

Parents, guardians, and caregivers are referred to CT General Statutes Sec. 53-21a, regarding leaving children unsupervised at the library; relevant text is included at the end of this document.

Parents should be aware that the Library is a public building open to all individuals. It is not the Library staff's function or purpose to provide supervision for children nor to care for children while parents or caregivers are outside the Library. The Library staff is not authorized to act in place of parents. Staff members are responsible for assisting all Library customers and cannot monitor unattended children. Staff will not monitor children leaving the Library.

Unattended children

1. At all times, caregivers are responsible for the conduct and safety of their children on Library premises. Caregivers must provide appropriate supervision based on the ages, the abilities, and the levels of responsibility of their children.
2. Caregivers are expected to be aware of the opening and closing times of the Library, bearing in mind that these can and do change. Sudden emergencies may occur in the Library and in such cases the Library assumes no responsibility for unattended children. Power failures or other emergencies can occur and require unexpected closing of the building. Parents, guardians, or caregivers should be sure that their children know what to do or where to go when the Library closes.
3. If a child (see CT General Statutes Sec. 53-21a*) is left at the Library after closing time, or as the result of an emergency closing, the police will be called.

Under no circumstances will a staff member transport children to another location. All Library users must leave the building at closing time.

4. All Library users, including children, are required to respect Library property and to act in a manner appropriate to the use and function of the Library (see Library Behavior Policy and Procedures). Children who are not using the Library appropriately, or who require excessive staff attention or supervision, will be asked to leave the Library and, if necessary, the police will be contacted.

5. Action regarding an unattended or neglected child will be taken when his/her health and safety (including emotional well-being) become an issue or there is disruptive behavior that is caused by or affects either the child in question or other Library customers.

6. When a staff member observes suspected abuse or neglect on the part of a parent or responsible caregiver, staff may contact the police, social services, or another agency about a child in danger at the Library.

Approved by the Library Board

August 27, 2002

Revised July 22, 2008

Revised May 22, 2012

Sec. 53-21a. Leaving child unsupervised in place of public accommodation or motor vehicle.

(a) Any parent, guardian or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, of any child under the age of twelve years who knowingly leaves such child unsupervised in a place of public accommodation or a motor vehicle for a period of time that presents a substantial risk to the child's health or safety, shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor. (c) Any parent, guardian or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, of any child under the age of twelve years who knowingly leaves such child unsupervised in a place of public accommodation or a motor vehicle between the hours of eight o'clock p.m. and six o'clock a.m. for a period of time that presents a substantial risk to the child's health or safety, shall be guilty of a class C felony. (P.A. 97-298.)

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