

UPPER SADDLE RIVER LIBRARY UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY

Introduction

The Upper Saddle River Library encourages children of all ages to visit the library and hopes they will find it a warm, inviting place to be. Programs and resources are offered to make the library enticing to children, to help children enjoy their visits, and to develop a love of books, reading and libraries.

The happiness and safety of children left alone at the library can be of serious concern. Young children left on their own in the library often become frightened or anxious. Children may be able to occupy their time for a short while, but when left unattended for any length of time when no library programs are being offered, they become bored, restless, and disruptive. Young children are not safe when left unattended in the library. The staff cannot know if the children are leaving the building with parents or with strangers. It is not the library's intention to seek out unattended children, but rather to have a reasoned response prepared when a problem presents itself. For the protection and well-being of children who visit our library, the following policy has been established.

An UNATTENDED CHILD is defined as any child under the age of 17 using the public library and facilities unaccompanied by a parent or responsible caregiver.

UNATTENDED CHILD WHEN LIBRARY IS OPEN

Children under 6

Children under the age of 6 may not be left unattended by an adult in any part of the Library. If children under the age of six are found without an adult, staff will attempt to locate the parent or other caregiver.

Programs – During story times or other programs, adults who do not attend the program with the child must remain in the building and must be visible when their children return from the program.

Children 6-8

Children 6-8 must have a parent or caregiver in the building with them at all times during the library visit. If children 6-8 are found without an adult, staff will attempt to locate the parent or other caregiver.

Children 9-12

These children are welcome to use the library unattended but should not be left alone for extended periods of time. No public place, including the library, can guarantee the safety of children. Parents are responsible for their behavior. If a child becomes anxious or disruptive the staff will attempt to find the parent or caregiver in the library. If they are

not available the staff will call the child's home. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to be accessible to pick up the child at any time.

CHILDREN 13 YEARS AND OLDER

Children 13 and over are old enough to use the library responsibly. If problems arise, they may be asked to leave or parents may be contacted. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to be accessible to pick up the child at any time. **THE CHILD MUST HAVE A WAY FOR THE STAFF TO CONTACT THE PARENT OR CAREGIVER AT ALL TIMES THEY ARE LEFT UNATTENDED IN THE LIBRARY.**

No Child 16 years or younger may be unattended in the library one half hour before library closing.

Procedures for providing safety for

UNATTENDED YOUTH AT LIBRARY EMERGENCY CLOSING

The Upper Saddle River Library will close due to emergencies because of inclement weather, power outages, etc. If the Upper Saddle River Schools close because of inclement weather the Library will also close. No child may be sent to the library if the schools close early due to emergencies.

When the library closes because of inclement weather or an emergency and school is still in session the schools will be notified and an announcement will be made.

An UNATTENDED CHILD AT NORMAL OR EMERGENCY CLOSING.

The Upper Saddle River Library closes at 9:00p.m. Monday –Thursday, 5:00p.m. Friday, 3:00p.m. Saturday, 5:00p.m. Sunday (mid September-mid May).

Please remember if your child is 9 years to 16 years and is left unattended **THE STAFF MUST HAVE A WAY OF CONTACTING THE PARENT OR CAREGIVER AT ALL TIMES THEY ARE LEFT UNATTENDED IN THE LIBRARY. THE PARENT OR CAREGIVER MUST HAVE DEFINITE ARRANGEMENTS TO PICK UP THE CHILD BEFORE CLOSING TIME.**

60 minutes before closing the library on any normal day or in an emergency an adult staff member will call the parent or caregiver to verify that the child will be picked up before closing. If a parent or caregiver cannot be reached after trying for 15 minutes the police department will be asked if they can assist the staff in helping to reach them by phone

If the parent has not arrived, two staff persons will wait with the child for 30 minutes after closing. If the parent or caregiver has not arrived by that time the staff members will notify DYFUS (Division of Family Services) that the child has been abandoned according to the following New Jersey Statute:

NJSA 9:6-8.21 prohibits parents from endangering the welfare of children. NJSA 30:5B-1-15 prohibits the library from functioning as a child care center unless licensed by the State of New Jersey. Therefore, responsibility for the conduct of minors remains with the parent/guardian. All minors must leave the library promptly at closing time. The above mentioned statutes may be enforced if minors are left unattended.

STAFF CANNOT DRIVE CHILDREN HOME.

STAFF WILL FILL OUT AN INCIDENT REPORT.

Approved by the Board of Trustees 9/13/00

