



## Safe and Unattended Child Policy

The Columbia Township Library strives to create and maintain a welcoming environment that encourages patrons of all ages to explore Library resources and share learning opportunities. It is for the safety of each child that the Library has adopted this policy. Busy, public buildings are not secure places for children to be left alone. Even if the parents/caregivers are not present, the parents/caregivers are responsible for their children's behavior in the Library, for damage to materials, equipment, and furnishings, and for injury to themselves and others. Parents or caregivers are also responsible for insuring that the child has a safe means of transportation home at closing or if the child is asked to leave the Library for a violation of Library rules. Library staff cannot and will not assume responsibility for children's safety and comfort when they are unattended.

1. Rules and Regulations for all Children
  - a. Unacceptable behaviors and the consequences of them are described in the Library's Patron Conduct Policy. This policy applies to all patrons, regardless of age.
  - b. If a child or youth is bothersome or unruly, the Library staff will make every attempt to restore appropriate Library behavior. If this proves impossible, the disruptive individuals will be asked to wait in the lobby until picked up.
  - c. Climbing on tables, shelves, chairs and other furniture is not allowed.
  - d. Children must walk while in the Library building.
  - e. Children should be encouraged to put away puzzles, toys, and games in their proper places. Books should not be re-shelved but left at the Circulation Desk.
  - f. A child of any age, who, due to disability or other special circumstance, requires supervision, assistance, or personal care shall be attended by a parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver at all times.
  - g. A child of any age, should not be left unattended in the Library or on the premises for an unreasonable length of time. The "reasonable duration" will be determined by Library staff based on the maturity of the child and the child's ability to demonstrate appropriate public behavior.
  - h. Staff will not be responsible if unattended children of any age leave the Library premises alone or with other persons. Further, staff will not be responsible for children who may be asked to leave the Library if the child is in violation of any Library policy.
2. Children Under the Age of 7
  - a. Must be accompanied by a responsible adult/teen in the Library.
  - b. May be required to be accompanied by a responsible adult/teen during and at Library programs.
  - c. Must be accompanied to the restroom by a responsible adult/teen.
  - d. If accompanied by a teen, the contact information for an adult parent/caregiver must be on file with the Library.



3. Children Ages 7 and over
  - a. May be left on their own to attend Library programs or to do homework, providing they are not disruptive.
  - b. Even if parent/caregiver is not present, the parent/caregiver is responsible for and liable for their children's behavior in the Library, for damage to materials, equipment, and furnishings, and for injury to themselves and others.
  - c. Adult parent/caregiver must be at the Library by the conclusion of a Library program.
  - d. Adult parent/caregiver contact information must be on file with the Library.
  
4. Unattended Children at closing
  - a. Unattended children must be picked up at least 15 minutes before closing time. Parents/caregivers are responsible for knowing Library hours.
  - b. In the case of a child who is unattended at closing (including emergency), the Library staff will try to notify the child's parent or adult caregiver. If the child's parent or adult caregiver cannot be located within 15 minutes, the police will be called.
  - c. Children will not be left alone in the Library or on the Library grounds. A Library staff member will wait with the child until the adult parent/caregiver, the police, or a protective services worker arrives.
  - d. Library staff members will not take the child home or anywhere away from the Library grounds.

**Rates and policies are subject to revision and will be posted if changed.**

**Approved December 20, 2022**