

WATAUGA PUBLIC LIBRARY UNATTENDED OR DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN POLICY

Children are always welcome and encouraged to visit the Watauga Public Library. Parents/guardians are encouraged to accompany their children to the Library for visits, and are responsible for the supervision of their children in the selection of reading materials, use of the Internet, and the behavior of the child during the visit. Responsibility for children using the library rests with the parent/guardian or assigned chaperon, not with library personnel. Parent-designated caregivers must demonstrate that they are willing and capable of supervising their younger charges or the Library will consider the child to be unattended and will contact the Watauga Police Department.

Library hours are clearly posted. Please meet your child before closing time.

Unattended Children

For the purposes of this policy and as defined in Chapters 101.003 and 152.102 of the Family code of the State of Texas, a child is any person under eighteen years of age.

Children age seven and under may not be left unattended in the library. They must be accompanied by a teenager or an adult. Responsible parties not attending a story time session with a preschooler must remain in the library.

Children ages eight and older may use the library unattended, subject to the other policies and procedures adopted by the Watauga Public Library concerning behavior, conduct, and demeanor.

If a child under eighteen years of age is left unattended in the library and it is thirty minutes or less until closing time, or if an unattended child becomes distraught (visibly upset while left unattended), library staff may, if necessary, use the following procedures in order to resolve the situation.

1. An effort will be made to try and identify the child and locate the parent or responsible guardian by walking through the library with the child. If no adult is located, a page will be issued over the intercom using the parent's name (if known), the child's name or physical description.
2. If the parent is not located within thirty minutes (ten minutes if the library is closing), library staff will attempt to locate the child's parent/guardian by telephone, utilizing library records, telephone directories, or other available resources.
3. If the adult does not arrive at the library within fifteen minutes of closing, the librarian in charge will contact the Watauga Police Department (5897).
4. Two staff members will remain with the child until the responsible adult or police personnel

arrive. It is permissible for the two staff members to walk the child over to the police department. Under no circumstances will a library staff member transport the child in their vehicle.

5. The child will be put in the care of the police personnel.
6. The librarian in charge will post a note on the front door for the adult/caregiver indicating the action taken.

Disruptive Children

Disruptive behavior is any behavior on library premises, which infringes on the rights of others using the library. Disruptive children will not be allowed to interfere with library service to others. Disruptive children will be approached in the following manner by library staff:

1. The child will be given a verbal warning indicating that such behavior is disturbing to other library users and is unacceptable. Staff may skip to the procedures listed under 3 below if circumstances warrant.
2. If the disruptive behavior continues, an adult parent/ guardian will be issued the same warning. If the child is unattended, he or she will receive a second warning.
3. If the disruptive behavior shows no sign of ceasing:
 - a) The parent/guardian will be asked to escort the child from the library premises.
 - b) If the child is unattended and twelve years of age or older, he or she will be asked to leave the library premises. However, if the library is closing, or it is after dark, the procedure for Unattended Children will go into effect.
 - c) If the child is younger than twelve years of age and unattended, the procedures outlined under the Unattended Children Policy will be followed.
4. If the child's disruptive behavior continues and he/she refuses to leave library premises, or, if the parent/guardian will not escort the child from library premises, library staff will call the Police (5897).

Library staff will document any incidents involving unattended or disruptive children and submit a report to the Library Director.

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