

Belden Noble Memorial Library

Unattended Children Policy

Service to children is an important part of the Library's mission. Children are encouraged to use the Library facilities and services. However, parents/caregivers should be mindful that the Library is a public building open to all individuals, and that unattended children may be vulnerable. Responsibility for children using the Library rests with their parents/caregivers and not with Library staff.

The following policy is designed to communicate the Library's concern for the safety of children in the Library and is in accordance with New York State law pertaining to unaccompanied minors.

Children under the age of 12

- Children under 12 may not be left in the Library unsupervised by a parent or caregiver, unless the child is in a supervised Library program. Parents/caregivers of young children may be required to remain outside the program room so that they are easily accessible to Library staff.

Children age 12 and older

- Children 12 years and older may use the Library unaccompanied by an adult provided they are able to comply with the Library's Code of Ethics and do not require excessive staff attention.
- Parents/caregivers are expected to be aware of the Library's opening and closing times and that the operating hours might change unexpectedly. The staff cannot monitor children leaving the premises, nor is it the staff's responsibility to know with whom a child is leaving.
- If a child remains in the Library at closing time, the police may be called. Under no circumstances can a Library staff member or volunteer drive a child home.

Parents/caregivers are responsible for the conduct and safety of their children in the Library whether or not the parent/caregiver is present. Children, like all Library patrons, are required to respect Library property and act in a manner appropriate to the use and function of the Library. Parents whose children are not using the library appropriately in accordance with the Library Use and Code of Ethics Policy, or who require excessive staff attention, will be asked to come to the Library to supervise their child to ensure acceptable conduct or alternatively to pick them up and remove them from the Library.

Adopted by Library Board of Trustees 08/226/2026