

MERIDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Policy on Unattended Children (Minors) in the Library

The Meriden Public Library encourages children of all ages and their parents/caregivers to use the services of the Meriden Public Library. However, it is not the Library's function or purpose to provide supervision or care for minor children while parents/caregivers are outside the Children's Library and/or the Main Library. Parents should be aware that the Library is a public building open to all individuals. The following policy has been designed to communicate the Library's concern for the safety and welfare of the children it serves.

- Parents/caregivers are, at all times, responsible for the conduct and safety of their children (minors under the age of 18) on Library premises. They must provide appropriate supervision based on the ages, abilities and the levels of responsibility of their children.
- Children under the age of 8 must have a parent/caregiver in the immediate vicinity and in visual contact with the child. If the parent/caregiver of a child under age 8 wishes to go to another area of the Library, the child must accompany them. In any case, no child under the age of 12 should be left unsupervised by a parent/caregiver for a period of time that presents a substantial risk to the child's health or safety. (see Policies Addenda, CT Gen. Statute 53-21a)
- Minors under the age of 18, like all library users, are required to respect Library property, and act in a manner appropriate to the use and function of the Library (see Library Code of Conduct). Minors who are not using the Library appropriately, or who require excessive staff attention or supervision, may be asked to leave the Library. The parents/caregivers of these minors may be notified, and if necessary, asked to stay with their minor children while visiting the Library.
- The Library discourages the practice of having minors (under the age of 18) be responsible for younger children in the Library for extended periods of time.
- Parents/caregivers should be aware of Library hours and make arrangements to pick up their children before the Library closes for the day.

The Library will contact the parent/caregiver of children who are left unaccompanied repeatedly in the building, and also reserves the right to call the police if a parent/caregiver cannot be reached. In extreme circumstances involving the welfare of the children, the Library may take appropriate steps with the Department of Children and Families.

Reviewed and adopted by Library Board of Trustees, September 23, 2013