

Unattended and Safe Child Policy

1. Purpose:

The Bridgman Public Library is dedicated to providing an environment that is inviting, pleasant, and safe for patrons of all ages. The Library sincerely encourages children to use and enjoy library facilities and services. However the Library is a public building open to all and therefore cannot be considered a safe place for unattended children.

The purpose of this policy is to inform parents and caregivers that the Library cannot take responsibility for the safety of an unattended child and to explain the procedures staff is required to take if a child is left unattended at the library.

2. Guidelines:*

Responsibility for a child using the Library rests with the child's parent or assigned caregiver, never the library staff. Parents will be held responsible for their child's actions in the library whether the parent is with the child or not.

"Unattended" means that the parent or assigned caregiver is not in the library with the child. Younger children must always be accompanied by an adult. Older children may use the library on their own.

A child who is age 5 or under must be within visual contact of the accompanying responsible adult when in the library.

A child who is age 6-8 must be under the supervision of an accompanying responsible adult when in the library.

A child who is age 9 and up may be at the library without an adult. However, if the child is left at the Library after closing he or she will be consider unattended.

The Library recommends that grade school children spend no more than 2 hours and middle school children spend no more than 4 hours in the library at a single time.

*There may be exceptions made to these guidelines if a child is attending a library program. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to ask library staff about specific programs.

3. Procedures:

All library patrons, including children, are expected to follow the **Rules for Library Use Policy**. The library invites parental cooperation in meeting these guidelines. A child who violates these rules may be asked to leave the library for the day. If an unaccompanied child who needs transportation is asked to leave the library because of a

rules violation or an emergency closing of the library, he or she will be given an opportunity to use the library phone to reach a parent or caregiver.

Fifteen minutes before closing, staff members will remind children of closing time, and allow children to use the library phone to call for transportation. If a child who needs transportation is still at the library at closing time, staff members will try to contact the child's family member by phone. ***If the parent or other adult has not arrived within fifteen minutes after closing, a staff member will contact the Bridgman Police Department.*** Two staff members will stay with the child until the police arrive.

Under no circumstances will a staff member provide transportation for an unattended child.