

UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY

The library is intended to be a place where children are welcome. They are encouraged to read, to explore various electronic formats, to attend programs, and to make full use of the library's resources. For the safety of minor children, and the enjoyment of all patrons using the library, the library has developed and follows a specific policy regarding unattended children. If you have questions regarding this policy, please do not hesitate to ask the staff to explain.

1. The library does not provide care or supervision of children, except to the extent needed to uphold the library rules of conduct and use, and does not accept responsibility for such care. Parents or other caregivers are responsible for their child's behavior, even if the child is in the library unattended.
2. Children under the age of **13** may not be left unattended in the library, except during scheduled library-sponsored programs. A child under the age of **13** will be considered unattended unless accompanied by a responsible caregiver over the age of 16 years old.
3. Children age **13** and older may be left unattended providing they are mature enough to stay alone and observe proper conduct. Such children are subject to the same rules of conduct as other patrons and the same consequences, including being asked to leave the library. This possibility should be taken into account when deciding whether to leave a child unattended in the library. If a child in this age group is not able to leave the library without an adult, then he or she should not be in the library without an adult.
4. Children of any age with mental, physical, emotional, or behavioral problems which render supervision necessary must be accompanied by a parent or other caregiver over the age of 18 at all times.
5. A child left unattended in the library in violation of this policy will be considered a child in need of care, and the matter referred to the police or Department of Human Services.
6. Unattended children below the age of 15 must be picked up at least 15 minutes before closing time.
7. In the case of a child below the age of 15 who is unattended at closing, the library staff will try to notify the child's parent or caregiver. If the child's parent or caregiver cannot be reached or has not come to pick up the child, the police will be notified, and the child will then need to be picked up at the Whitney Police Department.
8. Library staff members will, under no circumstances, drive the child home or to any other location.
9. Unattended children will be given a copy of this policy to give to their parents.