

UNATTENDED CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD APPROVED: DECEMBER 4, 2008

1. The dangers and inconveniences of unattended children

When children are left alone, they may become frightened or anxious. They may encounter hazards such as doors, furniture, electrical equipment, etc. They may also become bored and restless and may disturb the enjoyment and the work of others. Additionally they usually lack the necessary maturity to handle emergency situations such as fires, illness, or strangers.

The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern of the library staff. The responsibility for the safety and the behaviour of children in the library rests with the parent, guardian, or caregiver and not with library personnel. Library staff cannot be responsible for any child (regardless of age) who is in the library with or without adult supervision or for children who are demonstrating inappropriate behaviour.

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library is dedicated to providing a warm, welcoming, and safe environment for people of all ages. Sharing this environment with other people requires that all individuals and groups act in a manner that respects the rights of others.

2. An unattended child is defined as:

- (a) Any child under the age of 10 or any child who is unable to care for himself/herself or may need assistance.
- (b) Any child under the age of 13 who is in the library for prolonged periods of time on a repetitive daily or weekly basis.
- (c) A child who is not picked up by closing time and who is under the age of 13 or who is older but appears to need staff help.

3. How Staff should handle:

Ask unattended or unsupervised children under the age of 10 to give their name, the location of their parent or caregiver, and the time of their return.

Locate the parent or caregiver if present in the Library.

Children under the age of 10 left unattended for long periods of time in the Library (ie in excess of one hour) or over mealtimes may be questioned by Library staff regarding their arrangements to be fed, picked up, etc. Staff should attempt to contact the parent or caregiver but may call the Children's Aid Society (905 895-2318) if neglect is apparent. At closing

Unattended Children in the Library Policy

times staff will attempt to contact parent or caregiver of any young children left in the Library. If unable to make contact, staff will contact police to take charge of said children. The information staff person on duty will remain with the child until authorities arrive. Do not leave the child alone. File an incident report.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES DRIVE THE CHILD HOME.