



**Whitewater**  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

## **UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY**

The Whitewater Public Library is dedicated to providing a warm, welcoming, exciting and safe environment for people of all ages. Sharing this environment with other people requires that all follow the Rules for Public Behavior on Library Property established by the Board of Library Trustees and posted in the library building.

The Whitewater Public Library wants children to use its facilities and services. Very young children should always be accompanied by a parent/guardian or assigned caregiver. When children are left alone they may become frightened or anxious. If they wander through the building, they may encounter hazards such as stairs, doors, furniture or electrical equipment. They may also become bored and restless and could disturb the enjoyment and work of others.

The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern of the library staff. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with library personnel. Librarians are not responsible for children who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior. The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of young users:

Children from birth through age 6 must have a parent/caregiver in the immediate vicinity of the child. The assigned caregiver must be at least 12 years old and must carry emergency contact information. An exception would be children ages 4 and 5 attending a story time or other library program without a parent/caregiver in the room. However, the parent/caregiver must remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

If a child in this age group is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library and inform him/her of the rules. Every effort will be made to find the parent/caregiver, but if they cannot be found, the police will be called to come and pick up the child.

If a child in this age group violates the Inappropriate Behavior Policy, the child and the parent/caregiver will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the family may be asked to leave the library.

Children ages 7 through 12 may use the library on their own. However, parents are still responsible for the actions of their child(ren). Children exhibiting inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the library. If a child of this age group is not able to leave the library without an adult, he/she should not be in the library. This is of particular concern in inclement weather and after dark. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

Young people older than 12 are treated as adult users as it applies to this policy. However, they are still legally the responsibility of their parents and should have an emergency contact available.

#### Closing Time:

Children up through age 12 who need transportation home at closing time will be asked for telephone numbers of people who can pick them up at the Library. If transportation is not available within 30 minutes after closing time, the police will be asked to pick up the child(ren). Again, every effort will be made to contact a parent or guardian before the police will be called and two staff members will remain with the child until the police arrive. A note will be left on the door of the library indicating the location of the child.

Staff are instructed to do a "walk through" about 1/2 hour prior to closing asking children if they need to call for a ride home and if they do, the staff have the child(ren) call at that time.