

CRANBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY

• Preamble

The Cranbury Public Library welcomes and encourages families and children to come to the library. We are committed to provide resources and programs in order to promote a life long learning environment for all residents of Cranbury. One of our goals is to assist children to enjoy their visits to the library and to develop a love of books, reading and libraries. The following policy has been adopted to clarify for parents, children and staff, the concern of the library for the safety of younger patrons.

• Safety, Responsibility

The Library strives to provide a safe and welcoming environment, but is not responsible for the safety and well being of any patron beyond the extent reasonably expected of a public facility. Parents should be aware that the library is an open public building. The well-being and safety of children left alone is a concern to all.

Parents, even when absent, are legally responsible for the behavior of their minor children.

The Library staff is trained to provide public library service and is committed to help children with activities related to the Library. However, Library staff cannot nor is it their responsibility to serve as baby-sitters or disciplinarians. The staff is not responsible for preventing a minor child from leaving the Library alone or in the company of others.

• Unattended children

Preschool children must be accompanied and directly supervised by a parent or caregiver. Parents or caregivers of preschool children must remain in the Library while their children attend library programs.

Unattended school age children from kindergarten through 12th grade may use the Library for a time appropriate to their age and maturity while engaged in suitable activities such as homework or reading. Like all Library patrons, they are subject to the Library's Code of Conduct.* Parents should ensure that the child knows how to contact them.

• Disruptive Children

Unattended children may become anxious or bored which may lead to behavior problems.

All patrons, including children, are expected to respect Library property and other library patrons.

If a child's behavior is disruptive and the child is unattended, a staff member will approach him with a request to stop the behavior. If the behavior continues and he refuses to leave the Library, the parents will be contacted. If a parent cannot be reached, the Cranbury Police will be called. The judgment of the staff prevails when requesting the removal of a child from the Library. The Library may also prohibit the child from visiting or returning to the Library until the problem is resolved to the Library's satisfaction.

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• Closing Time Procedures

Parents and guardians should be aware of Library opening and closing times and make arrangements to meet and transport children who have been left unattended in the library.

Fifteen minutes prior to closing or in an emergency situation, children still in the Library will be directed to call their parents. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached or does not arrive at 15 minutes past closing time, the Cranbury Police will be called. Two staff members will stay with the child until the parent, guardian or police arrive. Under no circumstances is a staff member permitted to drive a child home or take him from the Library building.

The Library is not responsible for children outside the building who await transportation or who are socializing.

*The Code of Conduct is included in the Patron Use Policy. All Library Policies are available for public viewing on request at the Circulation Desk.

Adopted by the Cranbury Public Library Board of Trustees, July 8, 2004