



WASHINGTON PARISH LIBRARY

Unattended and Disruptive Children Policy

The Washington Parish Library recognizes the importance of library access for all citizens of the parish, but particularly for children. However, the safety and the welfare of children left alone in the Library is a serious concern of the Library Board of Control and the administration. The Library is a public building and staff cannot reasonably know whether every child is leaving a branch with parents or with strangers, or even by themselves. The Library is not equipped, nor is it the Library's role, to provide long term or short term care for children of any age. Only parents and guardians have the right and responsibility to guide and direct the reading, listening, and viewing choices of their own minor children. The Library does not stand in the place of parents (in loco parentis) in any aspect associated with library materials and services.

- Children below the age of twelve (12) may not be left unattended in the Library. They must be accompanied by a responsible adult who will supervise the minor child(ren) while on/in Library property.
- Parents, guardians or assigned chaperons of children nine (9) or younger must keep the child in view at all times and are responsible for their children's behavior while in the Library.
- Children age twelve (12) and older may use the Library unattended, but must display acceptable behavior.
- All minor children must be picked up before the Library closes.
 - Minor children who remain at the Library at the close of the business day will be allowed to call their parents/home to arrange transportation.
 - If a child (or children) remains in or outside the Library at the end of the public service day two staff members will remain with the child for up to 20 minutes. After 20 minutes, civil authorities shall be notified. Staff members should remain on the clock while attending to the children.
- Violations of this policy may lead to penalties, such as restriction of future library use.