

## **Unattended Minors Policy**

The Andrew Carnegie Free Library & Music Hall welcomes and encourages patrons of all ages to visit the library, use library resources and services, and attend library programs. While the Library makes every effort to maintain a safe and comfortable environment for all patrons, the Library is a public space open to all and Library staff cannot provide supervision for unattended minors or act as a substitute for childcare. Responsibility for a child's safety and behavior when visiting the Library rests solely with the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, whether they are physically present with the child or not.

Children requiring supervision may not be unattended or left in the care of others who are unable or unwilling to provide adequate care. The Library reserves the right to determine when a minor must be accompanied and supervised by a parent, guardian, or other designated caregiver. Staff may consider a child's age, ability and willingness to care for themselves, as well as their ability to understand and adhere to the Library's [Behavior Policy](#) when determining if a child requires supervision.

Parents, guardians, or caregivers who are supervising children in the Library are expected to remain within the child's immediate vicinity and maintain visual contact with the child.

Children will be subject to the same consequences of violating the Behavior Policy as any other Library patron, up to and including being asked to leave Library property. Repeated misbehavior can lead to a temporary suspension or, under extreme circumstances, a permanent ban.

Staff will attempt to contact a parent, guardian, or caregiver in circumstances such as the following:

- An unattended child is engaging in behavior that is disruptive to other library users, staff, or the normal operations of library business.
- An unattended child is involved in a situation that is potentially harmful to the health or safety of the child and/or others.
- An unattended child is left alone at the Library at closing time.

Such situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If parents, guardians, and/or caregivers cannot be reached, or are unresponsive, the Library will contact law enforcement for assistance. Staff reserve the right to contact law enforcement at any time if the situation warrants.

Additionally, Library staff are not permitted to transport children home.

### **Mandated Reporting**

Employees of public libraries are recognized as Mandated Reporters according to Pennsylvania State Code § 42.42, issued under the Child Protective Services Law. As such, Library staff members are legally required to file a referral with the Department of Human Services / ChildLine if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect. A referral can be submitted electronically through the [Child Welfare Portal](#), 24 hours a day.

### **Unattended Children at Closing Time**

As Carnegie is a walking community and many children may walk or bike around the neighborhood, any child who made their way to the Library independently will be reasonably expected to be able to leave the same way that they arrived, barring unforeseen circumstances.

Otherwise, if a child remains at closing time without an adult and is unable to leave independently, Library staff will attempt to contact the child's parent or legal guardian by phone. If a caregiver cannot be reached or is unable to arrive within a reasonable time frame, staff will contact the Carnegie Police Department. Staff reserve the right to contact law enforcement at any time if the situation warrants.

Library staff are not permitted to transport children home.