



Unattended Children Policy

*Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees
October 15, 2008*

South Brunswick Public Library

The South Brunswick Library prides itself on providing a warm and welcoming environment for people of all ages. We encourage the community to use our library often and to enjoy all the services it has to offer.

The Library, however, is also a public building and as in all public buildings, “stranger danger” is a real concern. Library staff cannot and should not be expected to prevent children from interacting with or leaving the library with a person who is not an appropriate chaperone.

Therefore, the Library Board of Trustees has adopted an Unattended Children Policy designed to promote the safety of the library’s youngest patrons. Young children unable to care for themselves should not be left alone in the library. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians/caregivers to supervise their children while they are using the library. The Library is not responsible for any consequences of parents ignoring their responsibility.

An unattended child is defined as a young child who is unable to care for him/herself when left alone in the library without another adult in sight/sound range, any child left alone for long period of time, or any child not picked up at closing time.

We ask that all guardians, for the safety of the children entrusted to them, follow the Unattended Children Policy adopted by the South Brunswick Library Board of Trustees.

The Unattended Children Policy is as follows:

1. Children under the age of 7 must have a responsible adult with them at all times. (An adult is defined as someone age 18 and older). The adult must remain in sight and conversation distance of the child at all times.

2. Children ages 7-10 may be left unattended for short periods of time but must have a responsible caregiver in the library at all times for the duration of the visit. The caregiver must be at least 12 years old and have the number of where a parent/guardian can be reached in case of emergency.
3. Children age 11 and above are welcome to use the library unattended but not for extended periods of time. We expect parents to set limits for their children's library visits. In general, the library considers more than four hours in the library without a parent or caregiver present excessive and inappropriate. Parents should be certain to provide their children with an emergency number where they can be reached at all times.
4. A child under the age of 18 with no means of getting home at the time the library closes is considered a stranded minor. The police will be notified to take custody of the stranded minor if he/she has no means of getting home when the library closes to the public.
5. If a child is left in the care of someone deemed not responsible by library staff, parents/guardians will be notified and asked to pick up the child immediately from the library.
6. If a child is left unattended in the library for an extended period of time, the library staff will also contact the parent/guardian responsible for the child. If no one is available, the staff reserves the right to notify police if deemed necessary.
7. Parents are still responsible for their children's actions while they are using the library. Children must follow the rules of appropriate behavior in the library and must heed all instructions and any warnings by staff. Children of any age will be asked to leave the library if they are behaving inappropriately.
8. Parents should be aware of the library hours and ideally arrive at the library 10 minutes before closing to be certain their child is picked up before the library closes for the evening. For up to date hours of operation, please call the library at 732-329-4000 ext. 7290 or check the library's website www.sbpl.info.

