

UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICIES

Ayer Library strives to provide children with the highest quality informational and recreational materials possible. We develop programs that will enrich the lives of children. We hope to encourage children to become life-long library users as well as develop in them a life-long love of reading. We also hope that the library is perceived as a warm, inviting, and pleasant place to be.

Out of concern for the security and safety of children, and to ensure the smooth operations and services to all children and families, the Ayer Library Board of Trustees has adopted the following policy regarding “unattended children” at the Ayer Library.

- ✓ Children under the age of 8 may not be left unattended in the Library, subject to the rules outlined below. A child is unattended if s/he is in the library without a parent or responsible adult 18 or older.
- ✓ If a staff member finds a child under 8 unattended, the following steps will be taken:
 - Staff member will determine if the parent is in the Library.
 - If the parent is not in the Library, the staff member will try to contact a parent.
 - If a parent cannot be located, the Ayer police will be called.
- ✓ Children under the age of 8 cannot be left unattended during special Library programs.
- ✓ Children 8 and older may be considered to be “on their own” in the Library. If disruptive, they will be asked to leave the Library. A second warning will result in a one-week suspension of all Library privileges. A third warning will result in a 2 week suspension. Further unacceptable behavior beyond the third warning may cause Library privileges to be revoked. Children “on their own” will not be allowed to use the Library for several continuous hours at a time unless they are engaged in appropriate library activities (quiet study, research, reading, crafts, relaxing, etc.). Unusually long stays at the Library (one or more hours) usually lead to disruptive and unacceptable behavior. Children will be asked to leave under this circumstance.
- ✓ Neither children nor adults are allowed to eat or drink in the Library except during special programs.
- ✓ The police will be called if “on their own” children under the age of twelve are not picked up by Library closing.
- ✓ Under no circumstances will a staff member take a child out of the library.
- ✓ The Library in no way assumes responsibility for any child left unattended at the Library.
- ✓ All Library patrons are expected to follow commonly accepted rules of good behavior.

Approved by Ayer Library Board of Trustees, January 16, 2001.