



Exeter Community Library Unattended Children Policy

The Exeter Community Library welcomes children to use its facilities and services. However, the care, safety, and behavior of children using the library – including their utilization of the library’s materials – is the legal and practical responsibility of the parent, guardian, or caregiver, not library staff. “Accompanied” is defined as “within sight” for the purposes of this document.

- The policy applies to children while they are in the building and on its grounds.
- The library is not responsible for the safety or well-being of any patron beyond the extent reasonably expected of a public library.
- The library staff does not provide care or supervision of children in the library except to the extent needed to uphold the library rules of conduct and use. Parents/caregivers may not use the library and library staff as a substitute for daycare or babysitting services.
- Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for the appropriate behavior of their children in the library.
- Children under the age of 8 must be accompanied and directly supervised at all times by a parent, guardian, or other responsible caregiver. If a child in this age group is found unaccompanied, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/guardian and inform him/her of this policy. If the parent/guardian cannot be found, the Exeter Township Police Department will be called for assistance.
- Children between the ages of 8 and 11 may be in the library without direct supervision as long as a parent/guardian is also present in the library building.
- Children age 12 or older may be in the library unaccompanied for a reasonable period of time if checking out books, doing research or homework, or are otherwise legitimately engaged in library activities. However, library-appropriate behavior is expected, and parents/guardians are still responsible for the actions of the child.
- The library staff is not responsible for any child who is left unaccompanied.
- The library staff is not responsible for preventing children from leaving the library or its grounds.
- Patrons with mental, physical, or emotional needs which render supervision necessary must be accompanied by a suitable caregiver at all times, regardless of age.

- Children are subject to the same rules of conduct as other patrons and are subject to the same consequences, including being asked to leave the library.
- The library is not responsible for supervision of unaccompanied children prior to opening or after closing. Parents/guardians should be aware of the library's posted hours and make suitable arrangements. When the safety of an unaccompanied child is in doubt, or if the library is closing and a parent, guardian, or other caregiver cannot be located, library staff is authorized to call the Exeter Township Police Department and two members of the staff will stay with the child until the police arrive.
- Violations of this policy are grounds for suspension of library privileges.
- The Executive Director of the library will have the final determination if a child may use the library unaccompanied.

Approved 1/8/2024