



# Whitby Public Library

## Unattended Child Policy

**Policy Type: Public**

**Authority/Created: Library Board**

**Date Created: September 15, 2004**

**Last Review: September 19, 2018**

**Date Reviewed: September 15, 2021**

The Whitby Public Library encourages and promotes children's use of the library. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to monitor the whereabouts, safety and behaviour of their children and to provide supervision that is reasonable to the needs of the child. Library staff cannot be held responsible for the welfare of children left unattended in library facilities.

Children nine years or younger must remain in the company of a parent or responsible caregiver while in the library. A child nine years or younger attending a library program need not be accompanied into that program by a parent or caregiver, unless otherwise indicated. Parents or caregivers must, however, be present in the building during the program in case an emergency should arise.

An unattended or lost child will be reassured by a staff member who will help them locate their parent or caregiver using procedures outlined below.

### **During Open Hours:**

Lead the child through the public areas of the building to locate their parent or caregiver. At the Central Library, lead the child through the public areas of the floor you are on. If the parent or caregiver cannot be located, use the PA system, where available, to ask the parent or caregiver to report to the appropriate information desk.

Verify with the child that this is the correct person.

If the parent or caregiver cannot be located within the building, attempt to contact them by phone.

Remain with the child until the parent or caregiver arrives.

In both cases, inform the caregiver of the Unattended Child Policy.

If all reasonable attempts to locate the parent or caregiver fail, call the Durham Regional Police Service at 905 579-1520. Complete an Incident Report.

### **After Closing Time:**

Concern for a child after closing hours is not necessarily restricted to those 9 years of age and younger. Staff should use their judgment and err on the side of caution for children under 16 in this circumstance.

If a child is unattended at closing time, discern whether transportation arrangements have been made. Staff may wait with a child for up to 15 minutes after closing for a caregiver to arrive, before contacting the parent or caregiver. If no arrangements have been made, contact the parent or caregiver by phone, inform them that the library has closed and they must come and pick up their child within 15 minutes.

Two staff members should be present at all times.

When the parent or caregiver arrives, verify with the child that it is the correct person.

Inform the parent or caregiver of the Unattended Child Policy.

If contact has not been made, and no parent or guardian arrives within 15 minutes after closing, call the police.

Under no circumstances will library staff provide transportation for unattended children.

Complete an Incident Report noting the child's name, parent or caregiver's name, phone number, and address.