

Goffstown Public Library Unattended Children Policy

The Goffstown Public Library welcomes children of all ages to use and enjoy the facilities, collections and programming offered by the Library. The Library staff attempts to provide a safe, welcoming environment for children to select books and other materials and to attend Library programming. We do not provide child care services; young children are not safe when left unattended. The staff cannot know if children are leaving the building with their parents or with strangers. For the safety of minor children and the enjoyment of all patrons using the Library we have developed a specific policy regarding unattended children.

1. The Goffstown Public Library and its staff do not assume responsibility for any child left unattended in the Library.
2. As used in this policy, the term “parent” may include legal guardians or other persons having custody or control of a minor.
3. Children under the age of eleven may not be left unattended at the Library. A child is unattended if a parent or responsible person over the age of fifteen is not present with the child at all times while in the Library.
4. At the discretion of a responsible adult, a child age eleven to fourteen may be left unattended for the period of time needed to select materials, complete a homework assignment, read, or attend a program. The child must know how to reach the adult in case the need should arise. Children should not be left for longer than two hours.
5. All Library visitors are subject to the “Patron Behavior Policy” concerning disruptive behavior. Parents are responsible for the behavior of minor children at all times, even if they are not in the Library with the child. Library staff does not serve *in loco parentis*, in place of the parent. If a child’s behavior is inappropriate for the Library, and he/she does not respond to appropriate guidance from Library staff, the parent will be contacted to remove the child from the Library. If the parent cannot be reached and the child’s behavior is deemed dangerous or unduly disruptive, the Goffstown Police Department may be called.
6. If a child is left at the Library without a way home one half hour prior to closing time, Library staff may contact the child’s parent using information provided by the child, the patron database, or the telephone directory. If contacted, the parent will be told that their child must be picked up immediately. If the parent cannot be located or if a parent has not picked up the child within one half hour, the Library staff may contact the Goffstown Police Department to take custody of the child.
7. Under no circumstances will a staff member take a child out of the Library or provide any transportation. No individual staff person is to be left alone in the Library or on Library property with a child after closing.

Approved by Library Trustees April 16, 2003

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