

Kent County Public Library Unattended Children Policy

Policy: Kent County Public Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming environment that encourages children to visit the library, use the library collection, attend programs, access technology, and use other library resources.

However, library staff cannot be responsible for children who are left unattended on library premises and may not supervise, provide child care, or assume responsibility for the safety of unattended children.

In compliance with Maryland Code, Family Law §5–801, in order to be on library property, a child under the age of 8 must be accompanied by a responsible caregiver who is at least 13-years-old and who remains in the immediate vicinity of the child and actively monitors the child’s safety and behavior. This applies to all children under the age of 8, including those who are participating in library-sponsored programs.

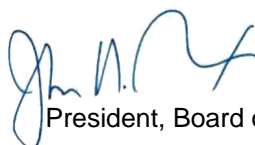
A child who is 8 and above may be in the library without the presence of a caregiver. Like all library users, children must abide by KCPL’s *Rules of Conduct* and may be asked to leave the library premises if they violate these rules.

If an unattended child is observed, library staff will follow established procedures to reunite the child with a parent, guardian, or other responsible caregiver. If library staff are unable to identify and/or make contact with a responsible caregiver, they will contact the Kent County Department of Social Services and/or the police.

If a child is engaging in high risk behavior, as defined in KCPL’s *Rules of Conduct*, or appears to be in medical distress, library staff reserve the right to contact appropriate emergency services before attempting to contact a parent or guardian.

Date: July 29, 2024

Signature:


President, Board of Trustees

Definitions: “Responsible Caregiver” – An individual who is at least 13-years-old and is providing active supervision to a child or children. This may be a parent,

guardian, other relative, childcare provider, or other person selected by the child's parent or guardian to supervise the child.

"Unattended Child" – Any child under the age of 8 who is not accompanied and supervised by a responsible caregiver. This definition is based on Maryland Family Law §5-801 and policy established by the Maryland Department of Human Services.