Library Policy F
UNATTENDED AND DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN

The safety of children in the Ferndale Public Library is a serious concern of the library staff. However, the responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent, guardian, or responsible childcare provider and not with library staff.

1. Children under the age of ten (10) must be attended and within close proximity or visual contact by a parent, guardian, or responsible childcare provider while in the Ferndale Public Library. Disruptive minor children will be asked to leave for the day after receiving one warning. Children under the age of ten (10) attending a library program must be brought into the building by a parent or responsible childcare provider who must remain in the building until the conclusion of the program when they again resume supervision of their charge. Children under the age of five (5) must be attended at all times unless attending a library program. It is not the library’s intention to seek out unattended children but rather to have a reasoned response prepared as problems present themselves.

2. This policy on unattended and disruptive children addresses minor children in order to provide staff with some discretion regarding procedure. It is anticipated that not all children under the age of eighteen (18) will need the same kind of attention specified here, but there may be circumstances related to the child or the child’s behavior that warrant these procedures regardless of the child’s age.

A. Minor child left unattended

   i. Children left unattended are often frightened and crying and should be comforted by the staff.
   ii. If it is determined that a child is lost or left unattended, a staff member should obtain the child’s name and the name of a parent, guardian or caregiver and attempt to locate the latter within the building.
   iii. If the parent cannot be located within the building, the staff member shall attempt to contact the parent through searching the library’s records, phone book, city directory, etc.
   iv. If a parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be located library staff shall call the police who will assume responsibility for the child.

B. Minor child left unattended at closing

   i. If the parent is not found in the building, a staff member should stay with the child and attempt to locate the parent, guardian or caregiver through searching the library’s records, phone book, city...
directory, etc. If the parent, guardian, or caregiver arrives within 15 minutes of closing, they will be informed of the library's policy and asked that the child be picked up in a timely manner in the future.  
ii. If a parent, guardian, or caregiver has not been located within 15 minutes of closing, library staff shall call the police, who will assume responsibility for the child.  
iii. Under no circumstance shall a staff member leave a child alone outside after closing or take them in their car.

3. Disruptive Behavior

A. Disruptive Minor Children (Under Ten Years of Age)

i. Minor children who are misbehaving or requiring constant attention will be asked by staff to correct their behavior.  
ii. If the disruptive behavior continues and the child’s parent, guardian, or caregiver is present in the library, a staff member should inform this person and request that this person take responsibility for the child’s behavior.  
iii. If the parent, guardian, or caregiver refuses or is unable to correct the behavior of the child, they will be asked to leave the library for the day.  
iv. If the child’s parent, guardian, or caregiver is not present in the building, and the child is under the age of ten (10), the staff member shall attempt to contact the parent through searching the library’s records, phone book, city directory, etc. and request that the parent, guardian, or caregiver come to the library and retrieve the child.  
v. If a parent, guardian, or caregiver of a child under ten (10) cannot be located, library staff shall call the police, who will assume responsibility for the child.

B. Disruptive Minor Children (Over Ten Years of Age)

i. If a disruptive child is ten (10) years of age or older, staff shall inform the young person that he/she is causing a disturbance and be issued a warning. If the disruptive behavior recurs or persists, the child will be asked to leave the library for the day.  
ii. If a parent, guardian, or caregiver is present, the staff will explain the circumstances of the problem and ask this person to take responsibility for the child’s behavior.  
iii. If a parent, guardian, or caregiver is not present, and the child must be asked to leave the library, the former will be determined and contacted. When contacted, he/she shall be told that the child
is being disruptive, shall be reminded of the library's policy, and shall be told that he/she must pick up the child.

iv. If the parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be contacted or if the library is closing, the police will be called upon to take responsibility for the child.

C. Persistent Misbehavior

If children are persistently and repetitively disruptive, an attempt shall be made to inform him/her of the library's policy and expectations regarding his/her responsibilities. Persistent and repetitive disruption may result in longer term denial of library access and services.

*Adopted on February 24, 2011*