

Unattended Children

Background:

The Hudson Library and Historical Society is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for patrons of all ages. It encourages children to use its facility and services. Responsibility for the behavior and well-being of these children, however, rests solely with the parent/guardian/caregiver and not with the library's personnel. Library staff cannot supervise children while doing their jobs. Therefore, the safety of all children left alone in the library is a critical concern. Young children left on their own can often become frightened and disoriented. If they wander through the library unattended they may encounter serious hazards that can compromise their safety.

Overview:

In an effort to provide a library environment that affords all patrons the ability to utilize library resources and services in a safe and relaxed manner, the Hudson Library and Historical Society has adopted the following procedures regarding unattended children:

- **Parents/guardians/caregivers may not leave children under the age of 9 unattended in the library.**
- **If a child under 9 is found unattended in the library, staff will attempt to locate his/her parent/guardian/caregiver and inform him/her of the rules. If all efforts to locate the parent fail, the Hudson Safety Center will be contacted to escort the child home or keep the child until the parent/guardian/caregiver can be reached.**

Guidelines:

- Library staff will attempt to locate parents/guardians/caregivers both in the building and by telephone. If these efforts are unsuccessful within 30 minutes, the Hudson Safety Center will be notified.
- The assigned caregiver of the child(ren) must be at least 12 years old and must carry emergency contact information.
- During storytimes and other programs for children 9 and under, adults who do not attend the program with the child must remain in the building and must return to the program area by the end of the program.
- **At closing time**, children of all ages who do not have transportation home will be asked for telephone numbers of people who can pick them up. If transportation arrangements are not made within 30 minutes of closing the Hudson Safety Center will be contacted to pick the children up.
- Two library staff members will stay inside the library with the child after closing until the Safety Center personnel arrives.
- After Safety Center personnel have picked up the child, library staff will leave a note on the front entrance notifying the parent/guardian/caregiver regarding the child's whereabouts.
- Library staff may not under any circumstances drive children home.
- In any situation involving child safety and specifically whenever law enforcement personnel are concerned, the staff will complete an Incident Report (see attached).
- **The Unattended Child Statement will be posted in the Children's Library of the Hudson Library and Historical Society.** Copies will also be available at all service desks.