



Unattended Children Policy

Authority: Library Advisory Board

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The Newberg Public Library welcomes all children and strives to create a welcoming space for children and their families to experience the library. Cooperation of a responsible child's caretaker is required to ensure the library continues to provide a safe and pleasant experience for all.

Staff cannot assume responsibility for children's comfort or safety when they are unattended. As a last resort, library staff may need to contact authorities to assist with discipline in the library or to ensure the safety of the unattended child.

The child's caretaker is responsible for the behavior of their child while they are in the library and on library property. A caretaker is any person at or above the age of 10 who is responsible for a child under 10 years of age.

The Newberg Public Library staff is committed to helping children with activities related to the library. Therefore, when children are using the library, it is the responsibility of caretakers, rather than the library staff, to supervise their children and ensure their safety. Caretakers may designate a responsible person to act as their representative for a child in the library.

Per the Oregon Revised Statutes, children under 10 years of age must be accompanied by a responsible person at the library. Newberg Public Library interprets "10 years of age" as a person who can function intellectually at a 10 year-old level; patrons who are over 10 years according to their date of birth but are incapable of intellectually functioning at or above an average 10-year-old level are also considered under 10 years of age for the purposes of this policy and must be supervised by a caregiver. This means the caretaker must supervise the child during the entire library visit by remaining within a reasonable distance, and being present at programs their child is attending.

Youth under 10 may attend a library program without their caregiver when it is expected or prearranged with library staff. Youth ages 7-9 may be out of sight of their caregiver if the caregiver remains within a reasonable distance and still recognizes their responsibility for their youth in the library.

When library staff witness, or other patrons report, children who are not adequately supervised or are engaging in behavior which is disturbing others or the operation of the library, the library staff will first attempt to locate the caretaker of the children and discuss the problem. If the caretaker of children under the age of 10 cannot be located after announcements are made and a brief search is conducted, the children will be referred to the Newberg-Dundee Police Department for their own safety and may be held at the Public Safety building until their caretaker can retrieve them.

Children aged 10 and older may use the library on their own. However, during regular school hours, library staff reserve the right to report possible instances of truancy to the Newberg-Dundee School District. Caretakers are still responsible for the actions and well-being of their child(ren). In accordance with *Newberg Public Library Courtesy Policy*, patrons, including children, involved in inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the library. **If a child aged 10 and older is not able to leave the library on their own, they should not be in the library without a parent/caregiver.**

All unaccompanied children at the library should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

The library is not responsible for a minor's selection of library materials, attendance at programs or use of the internet or other services.