UNION LIBRARY
OF HATBOROUGH
FOUNDED 1755

Unattended Children and Child Safety Policy

Union Library Company of Hatborough Policy and Procedure
Policy Number: P-103
Effective Date: June 19, 2024
Review Date: June 18, 2024

Scope

Union Library Company of Hatborough ("ULCH") welcomes children of all ages to use its materials and services. While in the library or on library grounds, the general responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children lies with parents, guardians, or designated caregivers. Staff members cannot and will not take responsibility for the care, safety, or behavior of children, nor act as a substitute for daycare. Parents/guardians are responsible for damage to library property caused by children in their care and for ensuring the library is left in good condition.

A caregiver is defined as an individual aged 18 or older who is assuming responsibility for a younger child with permission from the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). A child is defined as any person under the age of 18.

ULCH is mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to report suspected child abuse.

Purpose

This policy ensures the safety and well-being of children using the library, establishes clear expectations for supervision, outlines staff procedures when children are left unattended, and defines consequences for violations. It supports a safe environment for all patrons and ensures compliance with state reporting requirements.

Policy

Children of any age who exhibit disruptive, destructive, or potentially harmful behavior are subject to the library's Patron Conduct Policy.

Reviewed by ULCH Policies & Procedures Committee: 06/10/2024
Revisions adopted by ULCH Chater Board: 06/18/2024

Supervision Requirements:

- **Children aged 9 or under** must be accompanied by a parent/guardian/caregiver at all times. The adult must remain within sight and conversation distance.
- **Children aged 10–13** may be in the library without immediate proximity to a caregiver, but the caregiver must remain somewhere in the library.
- **Children aged 14 and older** may use the library unattended for an amount of time appropriate to their age and maturity, provided they comply with the ULCH Behavior Policy. ULCH may require a specific child aged 14–17 to be accompanied if behavior warrants it.
- All **unaccompanied children aged 14–17** must sign in at the front desk for security purposes.

Procedure/Form

Unattended Children Procedures

- If a **child aged 13 or under** is found unattended, staff will attempt to locate the parent/guardian/caregiver. If none can be found, law enforcement will be called and the child placed in their care.
- If a **child aged 14 or older** becomes ill or requires special care, staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian. If unsuccessful, law enforcement or emergency medical services may be called depending on circumstances.

Closing Time or Inclement Weather

- Staff will **never** give a child a ride home, take a child outside the building, or remain alone with an unattended child.
- If a **child aged 9 or younger** is left unattended at closing, law enforcement will be called. Staff will wait with the child until they arrive.
- **Children aged 14 and older** will be encouraged to arrange rides at least 30 minutes before closing. If no parent/guardian arrives by closing, law enforcement will be called.

Internal Documentation

- All incidents involving unattended children will be documented by staff.

Reviewed by ULCH Policies & Procedures Committee: 06/10/2024
Revisions adopted by ULCH Chater Board: 06/18/2024

Consequences of Violations

Violations may result in:

- Verbal or written warnings with a copy of the policy
- Temporary banning of the child and caregiver
- Requirement to resolve issues with social/family services or law enforcement before returning

Patrons may appeal actions by submitting a letter to the ULCH Board of Directors at 243 S. York Rd., Hatboro, PA 19040.

Truancy

Children of school age left unattended during school hours must present a written permission slip from a parent/guardian explaining the absence from school.

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