

Dunbarton Public Library

Unattended Children Policy

The Dunbarton Public Library welcomes children of all ages to use and enjoy the library, collections and programs offered. The library attempts to provide a safe environment for children to select books and other materials, and to attend library programs. However, young children are not safe when left unattended in the library. Staff cannot know if children are leaving the building by themselves, with their parents, or with strangers. For the safety of minor children and the enjoyment of all patrons using the library, we have developed a specific policy regarding unattended children.

1. The Dunbarton Public Library Board of Trustees and staff recommend that children under the age of 12 not be left unattended in the library. A child is unattended if a parent, teenaged sibling or responsible adult is not present with a child while in the library. At the discretion of a responsible adult, children over 12 may be left unattended to select materials, complete homework, read, or attend a program. The child must know how to reach the adult in case that need should arise.
2. All library patrons, including children, are subject to the Dunbarton Public Library's Code of Conduct policy. Parents are responsible for the behavior of minor children at all times, even if they are not in the library with the child. Library staff does not serve *in loco parentis*, in place of parent. If a child's behavior is inappropriate for the library, and she/he does not respond to appropriate guidance from library staff, the parent will be contacted to remove the child from the library. If the parent cannot be reached and the child's behavior is deemed dangerous or unduly disruptive, the Dunbarton Police Department may be called.
3. If a child is left at the library at closing time without a way home, library staff will call the child's parent. If the parent cannot be contacted, library staff may contact Dunbarton Police Department. Under no circumstance will library staff take a child out of the library, or give a child a ride home.
4. The Dunbarton Public Library and staff do not assume responsibility for any child left unattended in the library.
5. As used in this policy, the term "parent" may include legal guardians or other persons having custody or control of a minor.

Adopted by the Dunbarton Public Library Board of Trustees, September 16, 2019