POLICY 011
UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY

The Hewlett-Woodmere Library welcomes all children and their families to use its facilities/grounds, resources, and services. While Library staff members are available to assist children with library materials and services, they are not equipped, nor is it the Library’s role, to provide long- or short-time child care. Though that staff will always respond with care and concern, they cannot assume responsibility for the safety, behavior and comfort of unattended children, nor can they be expected to monitor or prevent an unattended child from leaving the building/grounds. Responsibility for children using the Library rests with the parent/guardian or caregiver.

Please review the following guidelines to insure a positive library experience for everyone.

1) Children age 10 or younger must be attended and adequately supervised by a parent or caregiver. For an older sibling or relative to qualify as a caregiver, the sibling or relative must be at least 14 years old.

2) Children over the age of 10 may use the Library unattended for a reasonable amount of time, provided that they are able to maintain proper behavior.

3) A child is considered “unattended” when the parent/caregiver has left the Library, even for a short period of time; when the parent/caregiver is in the Library, but has left the child to go to another location, e.g., the restroom, theater, meeting room, et al.

4) A child under the age of 10 must be accompanied to the restroom or when using the elevator or stairs by a parent or caregiver.

5) At Library closing or in the event of an unexpected emergency, every reasonable effort will be made to assist unattended children under the age of 18 in contacting the appropriate adult. If no responsible adult is reached, or if the child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the Library closing, the Librarian-in-charge may notify the police to assume custody of the child. Two staff members will wait with the child until the parent/guardian/other designated adult or police arrive.

6) If a child 10 years old and under exhibits disruptive behavior, the parent/guardian/caregiver must control that behavior, even if it means removing the child from the building. If the child is over the age of 10 and is unattended, then the child will be asked by staff member to behave properly. If the inappropriate behavior persists, Library staff may, at their discretion, seek out the parent/caregiver (if in the building) or contact them via phone. If no responsible adult can be reached, the Library may summon the police in order to preserve the Library’s operations and/or protect the interests of the child.

7) REPEATED VIOLATION OF THE UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY CONSTITUTES GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION OF LIBRARY PRIVILEGES FOR THE FAMILY
PROCEDURES FOR STAFF

In a situation where a child causes disruption to Library operations and the quiet enjoyment of Library facilities the procedures will be followed by Library staff:

1) Approach the child in a friendly manner and ask if someone over 14 years of age is with them.

2) If so, seek out the individual discreetly and inform them of their responsibility. Provide the parent or caregiver with a copy of the Library’s Policy on Unattended Children. If the parent or caregiver cannot control the behavior of the child, the parent or caregiver will be required to remove the child from the Library.

3) If no one is attending the child, request the name and telephone number of the parent or guardian from the child.
   
   a) A Librarian will call the parent or guardian, secure their address, apprise them of Library policy and indicate that they must remove the child from the Library within a reasonable amount of time.

   • If the parent or guardian does not pick up the child in the agreed period of time, a second call will be made advising the parent or guardian that the Police Department may be called to retrieve the child.

   • If the parent or guardian does not arrive at the Library after the second call and a reasonable period of time, call the Police to intercede. Obtain name and badge number of responding officer.

   b) If a child is extremely disruptive and parent or guardian is not able to be reached, ask the Police to intercede.

   c) If behavior can be controlled and parent or guardian cannot be reached by telephone, mail a copy of the policy along with a memorandum explaining it and describing the disruptive behavior.

   d) If after mailing the policy, a subsequent incident of disruptive behavior occurs, contact with the parent must be made by telephone and certified mail informing them that the family’s Library privileges will be suspended.

In an emergency situation such as the closing of the Library or when, in the judgment of the staff, the health, safety and welfare of the child are jeopardized, the Librarian-in-charge will make a reasonable effort to ascertain the whereabouts of the parent or guardian. However, if this is not possible, the Librarian-in-charge will seek intervention of police.
It should also be noted that parents, not Library staff, are ultimately responsible for the behavior of children of any age in the Library. Children deemed out of control or disruptive to other patrons or staff may be required to leave the Library premises.

**REMEMBER:** Under no circumstances should a member of the Library Staff drive a child home or to another location.

The attached report form must be completed and forwarded to the Library Director anytime this policy is implemented.

*Adopted, Board of Trustees (BOT), November 10, 2014*
*Revised, Board of Trustees (BOT), November 14, 2019*
UNATTENDED CHILD INCIDENT REPORT

Day/Date: _______________________________ Time: ________________

Child’s Name: ________________________________________________________

Contact’s Name: ________________________________________________________

Contact’s Telephone Number: _____________________________________________

Patrolman’s Name: ______________________________________________________

Patrolman’s Badge Number: _______________________________________________

Parent’s or Guardian’s Name (if obtainable): ________________________________

Description of Incident: _________________________________________________

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Staff Signature ___________________________ Date ________________________

Adopted, Board of Trustees (BOT), November 10, 2014
Revised, Board of Trustees (BOT), November 14, 2019
Unattended Child Parental Notification Letter

Dear______________________________,

The Hewlett- Woodmere Public Library has recently experienced an incident involving your child, ________________________________, when on Library grounds unattended by you or a responsible caregiver. A copy of the Library’s Unattended Child policy is enclosed here for your attention. We ask that you review this policy and make every effort to follow it. We do not wish to suspend Library privileges for you or your family, but the proper operation of the Library and the maintenance of a pleasant and welcoming environment are our primary responsibilities.

If you have any questions regarding this policy or its enforcement, please contact the undersigned.

Very Truly Yours,

Board President or Library Director

Adopted, Board of Trustees (BOT), November 10, 2014
Revised, Board of Trustees (BOT), November 14, 2019