

Unattended Child Policy

1. The Trustees and staff of the Exeter Public Library hope that children and parents will find the Library inviting and enjoyable and will visit often. However, in the interest of safety, no child under the age of 11 years may be left unattended in the Library. A child is unattended unless accompanied at all times by a parent or caregiver, or another person 16 years or older.
2. Parents are responsible for the welfare and behavior of their children while they are in the Library. The Exeter Public Library staff is committed to helping children with activities related to the Library. However, Library staff cannot, nor is it their responsibility to serve *in loco parentis*, as baby-sitters, or as disciplinarians.
3. Children eleven (11) or older are considered “on their own” as patrons and may use the Library alone at the discretion of the parent or caregiver. If the adult feels it is unsafe for their child in this age group to leave the building without adult supervision, that child should not be in the Library unattended.
4. Parents or caregivers must stay in the Library during preschool story times.
5. The Library is a public building and as such it could be a dangerous place for a young child alone. Each year in the United States, over 50,000 children are abducted and never found. Library staff cannot know if children are leaving the building alone, with parents, or with strangers.
6. Parents or caregivers are reminded that unexpected events can occur: the child could wander out of the Library and into the street, be approached by unsavory people who sometimes visit public buildings, or be physically injured. The staff is not licensed to perform childcare and have other duties preventing them from supervising each child.
7. Parents and caregivers should be familiar with the Library’s hours of operation and should not leave their child before opening or after closing. Close attention should be paid to unexpected closings (storms, power outages, etc.). Prior arrangements and contingency plans for immediate pick-up should be discussed with the child.
8. The Exeter Public Library assumes no responsibility for children left unattended on Library premises after closing. Staff will try and contact a parent; if they are not available, staff will contact the Exeter Police Department. At time of closing, if parent or caregiver cannot be located, two Library staff members will remain with the child until a police officer arrives.
9. Under no circumstances will a staff member ever take a child out of the Library or give a child a ride home.

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10. Parents are reminded that under certain circumstances the following New Hampshire State Laws may apply: RSA 169-B: 41-43; RSA 169-B: 45; RSA 169-C: 3(I) and 3(XIX)