

## Unattended Children Policy

The Malta Township Public Library welcomes children to use its facilities and services. However, the responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children using the Library rests with the parent, legal guardian, or designated caregiver.

The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern of the Library staff. The Library is a public building, open to all. In order to create an environment of safety and maintain an atmosphere where reading and study can be encouraged, the following policy has been established.

For the safety and comfort of children, a parent, legal guardian, or designated caregiver must accompany children under the age of 8, while they are using the Library. While in the Library, the parents, guardians, or caregivers are responsible for monitoring and regulating the behavior of their children. Children 8 years and older may use the Library unattended, subject to other rules and regulations of the Library concerning behavior, conduct, and demeanor.

Parents or guardians of children of any age who have special needs because of disabling conditions such as impaired physical or mental ability, disruptive behavior, emotional problems, inadequate attention span, incomplete social skills, etc. must remain with their children at all times while they are in the Library.

Parents should be aware of the Library's hours and keep in mind that those hours may change due to holiday schedules, inclement weather, or other unforeseen emergencies. Parents must make contingency plans for the child's immediate pick-up due to unexpected closings. To avoid having your child become anxious or frightened, please inform him/her of your whereabouts and how to contact you in an emergency.

Teachers, daycare providers, or other youth leaders may not leave groups of unattended students in the library, regardless of the age of the students.

Library staff members will be guided by this policy in situations such as:

- An unattended child is found frightened or crying in the Library
- An unattended child is perceived to be endangering him or herself
- Another person in the Library poses a perceived threat to an unattended child

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- Using profanity or other language that is abusive to other patrons or employees
- Abusing library furniture, equipment, or materials
- Fighting on library property
- Running and/or screaming within the library building
- Using the emergency exits at times other than during an emergency

After evaluating the situation, Library staff members will attempt to contact the parent or legal guardian of the unattended child. In the event that the parent or legal guardian cannot be contacted within 30 minutes, local law enforcement officials will be called. Two staff members will wait with the child until law enforcement officers arrive.

Parents must pick children up at least 10 minutes before the Library's posted closing time. If a child is alone at closing time, the staff will attempt to call the parent, legal guardian, or designated caregiver. If no one can be reached on the first attempt, the staff will contact local law enforcement officials to assume responsibility for the child. Two staff members will remain with the child inside the library entrance until law enforcement officials arrive. A note will be placed on the door notifying the parent, legal guardian, or designated caregiver that the child is in the care of local law enforcement officials.

Under no circumstances shall a Library staff member transport or take a child away from the Library building.