



Allen Parish Libraries

"Bringing the World to You"

Unattended Children Policy

Allen Parish Libraries (APL) encourages young patrons to attend programs and use our collections and equipment. APL staff is available to assist and support children in using those resources. APL also asks parents to help ensure the safety of our young patrons in the library.

APL library is a public place where young patrons may be at risk.

APL staff is not responsible for children left unattended at the library premises. We often ignore children's movements and circumstances because we tend to other library patrons. It should be understood that library employees are not responsible for supervising children who are using the library.

APL does not monitor children's library usage; parents/guardians are responsible for what books children read and what websites they visit.

- Children aged twelve (12) or younger may not be left unattended. They must be accompanied by a responsible adult or mature adolescent (sixteen years or older).
- When unattended children ages 12 and under are left alone in the library, our staff will try to contact the child's parents/guardians/caregivers. Library staff will contact Allen Parish Law Enforcement if no one can be found.
- Staff members are **NOT** allowed to assume responsibility for any child without a parent, guardian, or assigned chaperone, even for a short period.
- Parents, guardians, or assigned chaperones of children 12 or younger must always remain near their children and keep them in view.
- The parents, guardians, or assigned chaperones are responsible for their children's behavior while in the library.

- Children aged 11 and 12 may be left unattended **ONLY** if they participate in a library-sponsored program. Children aged thirteen (13) and older may use the libraries alone but must display acceptable behavior.
- If a parent or guardian drops off a child to participate in a program, the child must have a phone number where the parent/guardian can be reached for the time of the program. Children must be picked up immediately at the end of the program.
- Disruptive behavior is not allowed, as defined in the *Rules of Conduct* and interpreted by library staff. Children who violate the *Rules of Conduct* may be asked to leave the library. The APL staff may contact the Allen Parish Sheriff's Office if an unattended child age is disruptive or is in distress as defined in the *Behavior Policy*.
- **Disruptive behavior may result in the following actions:**
 - For a first offense, a verbal consultation with the parent.
 - A second instance may be documented with a written warning.
 - A third instance may result in the loss of library privileges for a time commensurate with the disruption and at the library director's discretion.
- All school-age students cannot be in the library during school hours from 8 AM to 2:30 PM on school days unless they are accompanied or have written proof from school authorities/parents or guardians. If they are at the library during these hours, the library reserves the right to report instances of truancy to the Allen Parish School Board and its Staff/Law enforcement.
- Continued and repeated violations of this policy will lead to progressively more severe penalties.

Library Tours / Field Trips

- Children on tours, field trips, etc., must be accompanied by chaperones at all times, with a sufficient number for any group/team. The recommended minimum is one chaperone per fifteen children.

AT Closing

- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians/caregivers to make sure their children have transportation to and from the library. When unattended children ages 12 and under are left at the library at closing time without transportation, our staff will try to contact the child's parents/guardians/caregivers. If no one can be found, Library staff may contact Allen Parish Law Enforcement at the discretion of the branch manager or staff.

- Any child ages 13-17 who is left at the library after the closing time will be turned over to the Allen Parish Law Enforcement under the Code of Conduct. Please consider that the library sometimes must close early due to circumstances beyond our control.

Adopted by the Board April 18, 2013
Revised by the Board June 3, 2022