

THE TOWN OF PELHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
CHILD SAFETY & UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY

Expectations for Children's Safe Use of the Library

The library welcomes children to use its facilities and services. The responsibility for the care, safety and behavior of children using the library rests with the parent/guardian or caregiver. As with any library user, a child's behavior is unacceptable if it disrupts the normal use of the library by others or interferes with library staff in the performance of their duties. The library is concerned for the safety of all its users but staff is not responsible for supervising children, and parents/guardians are reminded the library is not a substitute for daycare.

Library Staff Actions Relating to Children at Various Age Levels

This policy is intended to inform the public and to guide library staff when they are confronted by unattended or misbehaving children. The library recognizes that such circumstances may have widely varying facts and conditions, and this policy does not take the place of the exercise of sound judgment in addressing particular circumstances. Under no circumstance will library staff assume responsibility for a child, physically prevent a child from leaving the library or accompany a child not in their care off library property.

Children through age 7 must be supervised by a parent or caregiver at all times on library property. Children who are 8 – 11 years old may use the library unattended for an amount of time appropriate to their age and maturity, but must have contact information for a parent or caregiver that can assist in an emergency. Children who are 12-17 years old are treated as adult users, but are still the legal responsibility of their parents/guardians.

Library staff who observe unacceptable behavior will inform the child and the parent or caregiver, if present, of this policy. If inappropriate behavior continues, the parent or caregiver will be asked to remove the misbehaving child from the Library. If the child is unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver, staff will follow the library's unattended child policy.

Unattended Child Policy

Unattended Child through age 7 at any time: If a child under the age of 8 is on library property without direct supervision of a parent or caregiver at any time, library staff will:

- A. attempt to comfort the child, if necessary;
- B. locate the parent or caregiver in the library, explain the Child Safety Policy, and provide a copy of the policy to the parent;
- C. if parent or caregiver cannot be located at the library, make reasonable efforts to contact a parent or caregiver to immediately collect the child; and
- D. if the parent or caregiver cannot be reached after an appropriate time, staff will call the Village of Pelham Manor, NY Police, to collect the child.

Unattended Child through age 11 at library closing. If an unattended child through age 11 (or older if the situation warrants it) is in the Library within 15 minutes of closing time, library staff will:

- A. contact the child's parent or guardian and/or ask the child to do so. If a parent or caregiver cannot be reached or does not arrive within 15 minutes following closing, staff will call the Village of Pelham Manor, NY Police, to collect the child
- B. remain with the child until the parent, caregiver or police arrive;
- C. if the child leaves under the care of the police, place a note on the library door stating "Unattended child is in the custody of the Pelham Manor New York Police, 738-1000." Names will not be stated on the note;
- D. under no circumstance will library staff transport or accompany any child from library property.

Each incident of an unattended child on library property will be reported in writing to the Director and the Board of Trustees.

Adopted by the Town of Pelham Public Library Board of Trustees,03/04/2015