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# Board Policy



## **Unattended Child Policy**

The safety and welfare of young children left alone in the Library is a serious concern for the Pierce County Library System, its Board of Trustees and staff. If an unattended/vulnerable child comes to the attention of Library staff due to behavior, staff will make a good faith attempt to contact the parent or guardian. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the child will be referred to the local law enforcement agency. Library staff cannot prevent a minor child from leaving the building.

- An unattended child is a child under the age of six who is present inside the Library at a time that such person's parent, guardian or responsible caregiver is not also present on that Library Branch property or in the immediate vicinity of the child. Children six years old or younger should be accompanied by an adult or responsible older adolescent.

A vulnerable child is an unattended child of any age whose safety or well being would be at risk if sent outside the Library building. Examples of vulnerability include: a child who is too young to be on his/her own, a child in an unsafe area, or a child left alone outside the library after business hours.

Everyone is welcome in Pierce County Library facilities. The staff of the Library strives to create a welcoming, fun and friendly environment for all library users. The Library offers many programs and services that encourage children and adults to develop a love of books, reading and learning. The Library is not equipped, and it is not the Library's role to provide long or short term child care.

For the safety and comfort of children, a responsible adult or caregiver should accompany children when they are using the Library. Libraries are public buildings and it is not in the best interest of children to be left unattended. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for their minor children, and their behavior in the Library or on Library grounds, whether or not they accompany them.

Staff will be guided by this policy in situations such as:

- A child is found frightened or crying in the Library
- A child is perceived to be endangering him or herself, or there is a perceived threat to the unattended child
- A child exhibits inappropriate behavior in the Library
- A child has not been met by a responsible caregiver at closing time

### **Board Policy 4.15**

**Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Pierce County Rural Library District May 13, 2009.**