

Ajax Public Library Unattended Children Policy



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1. Purpose

- 1.1. Ajax Public Library welcomes and encourages children of all ages to enjoy Library services, programs, collections, and spaces.
- 1.2. While the Ajax Public Library strives to provide a safe environment for everyone, parents/guardians or assigned caregivers are responsible for the supervision of children in their care while children are on Library premises. Library staff cannot assume responsibility for the safety and well-being of children left unattended at the Library.

2. Definitions

The following definitions should be used when reading this policy:

- 2.1. **Child:** All persons who are nine (9) years of age and under.
- 2.2. **Caregiver:** Parents, guardians, caregivers, older siblings, relatives who are directly responsible for the care and well-being of a child nine (9) years of age and under while in the Ajax Public Library. In alignment with the Town of Ajax, the Library defines a competent caregiver as an individual aged fourteen (14) years or older to whom the parent/guardian has given responsibility for the care of the child.
- 2.3. **Unattended Child:** A child left without visible supervision by a caregiver within the Ajax Public Library.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- 3.1. All customers of the Ajax Public Library.
- 3.2. All Ajax Public Library employees.

4. Procedures

- 4.1. When an unaccompanied child who is nine (9) years of age or younger is found in the Library, staff will:
 - 4.1.1. Attempt to locate child's parent/caregiver in the Library or by telephone.
 - 4.1.2. Remain with the child in a public space, if possible near the service desk, until the parent/caregiver arrives.
 - 4.1.3. If the parent/caregiver is on the second floor of the Main Branch, staff will page the parent/caregiver to come to the first floor desk.
 - 4.1.4. If the parent/caregiver is in the recreation complex at McLean or Audley, staff will call the customer service desk of the recreation complex to ask for an all-call for the parent/caregiver to return to the Library.
 - 4.1.5. If reasonable attempts to contact the parent/guardian fail, staff will call Durham Regional Police for assistance to ensure the health and safety of the child.
 - 4.1.6. A child nine (9) or younger who wishes to leave the Library cannot be detained by staff. If there are concerns for the well-being of the child, Durham Regional Police will be contacted.
- 4.2. If a child is at the Library at closing time, emergency closings, or an emergency situation, staff will attempt to contact the parents/guardians. If the parent/guardians cannot be contacted, staff will notify the Durham Regional Police. Staff will remain with the child in pairs until the police arrive. Under no circumstances will Library staff transport or take the child away from the Library building.
- 4.3. When a parent/ caregiver has been contacted to pick-up an unattended child, they will be asked to show identification with their name and provide a phone number to staff.
- 4.4. **Programs**
 - 4.4.1. A child between the ages of six (6) and nine (9) who is attending a Library program need not be accompanied by a parent/guardian or caregiver in the program unless otherwise indicated. However, parents/guardians or caregivers must be present in the Library during the program in case an emergency should arise.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1. Staff are expected to respond when children are left unattended at the Ajax Public Library, and they will take appropriate action, including contacting the child's family, Durham Regional Police, or Durham Children's Aid Society as the situation warrants.
- 5.2. Under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, section 125, Library staff have the Duty to Report if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child is in need of protection.

6. Related Documents

- 6.1. [Acceptable Behaviour Policy \(LIB-AP-089\)](#)
- 6.2. [Durham Children's Aid Society](#)

7. Distribution

This policy should be posted on the website and shared with all staff.