

Unattended Child Policy

The Worth Public Library encourages children of all ages to visit the Library with their parents to meet their informational, educational, and recreational needs. The Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming environment for people of all ages; however the Library is a public building. Anyone can enter this building whether they are a danger to children or not. It is impossible for the library staff to guarantee a safe environment.

Responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the Library rests with the parent, adult guardian, or caregiver and not with the Library staff. Parents, adult guardians or caregivers are responsible for the behavior of their children in the Library, whether or not the parents, guardians or caregivers are in attendance. Library employees cannot be responsible for children who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior.

Unattended children eleven (11) years of age and older are free to use the Library's resources provided that their behavior is not disruptive to other patrons or staff members. Children that arrive and/or stay seated with each other as a group will be treated as a group. If a child is visiting the library unattended with other unattended children, and there is a behavior issue with any child in the group, the entire group may be asked to leave. Staff members cannot mediate altercations between children, or determine who is at fault. Children whose behavior violates the Library's Patron Behavior Policy will receive a warning. If the behavior persists, they will be asked to leave the Library. This is regardless of weather conditions.

If the child does not leave immediately or is not picked up within a reasonable time limit, Worth Police may be called to take responsibility for the child.

Repeated violations of the rules may lead to the suspension of library privileges or the need for parental supervision while in the library.

If a child is not able to leave the Library without an adult, he/she should not be in the Library without an adult.

The Library should not be used as a daycare center for children of any age nor should it be used as an alternative shelter for children. Library facilities are not licensed or designed to provide basic care needs such as physical exercise, nutrition, or emergency care. *Children who are too sick to attend school should not be sent to the library.* Parents should be aware that medical decisions can be made only by an adult-aged caretaker.

Children ten (10) years of age and under must be accompanied by, attended to and within close physical proximity of a parent or other responsible person who is a minimum of seventeen (17) years of age. If an unattended child calls attention to himself or is noticed, Library staff will attempt to locate the parent or other responsible person in the Library. If he/she cannot be located in the building or at home within thirty (30) minutes, the Worth Police Department will be contacted to pick up the child.

Parents are responsible for supervising their child's (children's) access to Library materials. While staff members are available to lead young people to materials selected with children's interests and needs in mind, it will be assumed that children who visit the Library unattended are authorized to use the full range of materials available to our patrons.

A signed Parental permission form is required before children may use Internet computers.

If unattended children of any age are present at closing time, a supervisor shall attempt to notify a parent or legal guardian by phone. If attempts to reach a parent or legal guardian are unsuccessful, Worth Police shall be summoned to take custody of the child. All action taken in above incidents shall be reported to the Administrative Librarian.

From time to time the Worth Public Library schedules or provides programs which are designed and suitable for attendance by children without adult supervision. Such program announcements will so indicate, and if no indication is included, then parental supervision is required.

Library staff will establish parameters and procedures for building capacity, seating, and use of computers, equipment and materials in accordance with state and local safety guidelines.

The Worth Public Library may close due to emergencies because of inclement weather, power outages, or other unforeseen emergencies. If the Worth Public Schools close because of inclement weather, the Library may also close. No child may be sent to the Library if the schools close early due to emergencies. When the Library closes because of inclement weather or an emergency, and school is still in session, schools will be notified and an announcement that the Library is closed will be requested.

Children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency should that person need to be contacted by a staff member. No public phone is available at the Library. Every unattended child must, upon request of the supervisor, furnish his/her first and last name as well as the name and phone number of a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver who is responsible for him/her. A child who refuses to provide this information may be asked to leave the Library for the remainder of the day. A child who provides false information may have his/her Library privileges suspended for a period of time.

Adults who are unaccompanied by children and who have no specific need to use the Youth Services Department's resources or services will not be permitted to use the Department as a work space. Those adults will be directed to other areas of the Library.

The parent or guardian of a child whose privileges have been suspended may request in writing that the decision be reviewed by the Board of Trustees at the next monthly Board meeting. The parent or guardian shall be notified of the Board's decision by the Administrative Librarian with seven (7) days of the regular Board meeting. Requests may be addressed to

Worth Public Library Board of Trustees
6917 W. 111th Street
Worth, IL 60482

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Thomas Lee Miller

President, Board of Trustees