



Commerce Township Community Library

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Unattended Children Policy
Commerce Township Community Library
Approved June 2014

The Commerce Township Community Library seeks to provide an enriching environment for patrons of all ages.

Because the Library does not act *in loco parentis* (in the place of a parent), the use of the library by minors is expected to be monitored by a Responsible Caregiver. For purposes of this policy, "Responsible Caregiver" is defined as the person who accompanies a child to the library and attends the child while there. A Responsible Caregiver may be a parent, guardian, teacher, other adult caregiver, or sibling at least age 16.

Children under the age of twelve are expected to have a Responsible Caregiver present in the Library Proper at all times while the minor is using the Library. The Library Proper is defined as the main room where the materials, computers, and public service desks are located.

Children under the age of eight must have a Responsible Caregiver within sight and conversation distance at all times. The Responsible Caregiver is expected to supervise the child and ensure that the child's behavior is not disturbing to others.

Children between the ages of eight and twelve years may be in the Youth Services Department independently, with the Responsible Caregiver present and readily accessible in the Library Proper. The Responsible Caregiver may not leave the minor unaccompanied in the Library Proper to go to the lobby, parking lot, programming room, or Friends' Book Sale.

Children ages twelve and older may use the library unaccompanied by a Responsible Caregiver. The child must be able to promptly contact a Responsible Caregiver if requested by Library staff. Unaccompanied children who disturb other library patrons or become otherwise disruptive may be asked to leave the library if the disruption continues after reasonable warning.

Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children in the library, whether or not the parent is present.

Children under the age of twelve with no Responsible Caregiver present are referred to as "Unattended Child(ren)." Unattended Children are not permitted to remain in the Library. If the Library staff observes an Unattended Child, they will first verify the child's age and determine whether a Responsible Caregiver is present. If no Responsible Caregiver is present, the Library staff will attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or other party responsible for the child. In the event that the parent, guardian, or other responsible party cannot be located, staff will notify the local police (Oakland County Sheriff's Department - Commerce Township Substation: (248) 858-4950). In the event of an emergency, staff will call 911.

When any child under the age of sixteen is present in the Library at closing time, the Library staff will attempt to reach a parent, guardian or other party responsible for the child, and two full-time staff members will wait up to fifteen

minutes past closing for the child to be picked up. The police will be notified beyond this point (Oakland County Sheriff's Department - Commerce Township Substation: (248) 858-4950). Under no circumstances will the Library staff provide transportation for any child.

If a patron wishes to request a change to the Library's Unattended Children Policy, he or she should put this request in writing addressed to the Library Director. The Director will respond in kind with a decision and an explanation of action taken or not taken regarding the request. If the patron is not satisfied, he or she may appeal to the Library Advisory Board who will also respond to the patron with its decision. This may be appealed to the Commerce Township Board whose decision on a matter is final.

This policy, as well as any Library policy, will be made available on the Library's website or in print format upon request.