

Unattended Children Policy

Service to children is an important goal at Pekin Public Library. Children of all ages are welcomed and encouraged to use the library materials, programs and services. The Pekin Public Library is a public building and is open to all, regardless of origin, age, background and views.

Library staff strives to ensure that the Library is operated in a safe manner. However, because the buildings are open to all, the Library cannot be considered safe place for unattended children. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the Library rests with the parents, legal guardians, or other responsible adult caregivers (hereinafter "parent or responsible adult".) **Please note: Library staff is NOT responsible for the care and safety of unattended children in the library.**

In order to maintain a safe atmosphere where reading and study are encouraged, the following policy has been adopted by the Board of Library Trustees:

- Children age 9 and younger must be accompanied continually by a parent or responsible adult. A parent or responsible adult must remain with the children at all times and in the case of an adult caregiver, have emergency contact information with them or available to them.
- If a child age 9 or younger is found to be unaccompanied in the Library, staff will try to locate the parent or responsible adult caregiver to remedy the situation. If a parent or responsible adult is unavailable, the Police, DCFS, or other appropriate government agency will be called.
- Children age 10 and older may use the Library without a parent or responsible adult present, but must be able to reach a parent or responsible adult immediately, either in person or by phone. All children in the Library must follow the posted *Rules for Considerate Library Use* and are expected to use the Library appropriately. Children who do not follow these rules are subject to the same consequences as other library users, including being required to leave the Library or losing library privileges.
- Situations may arise when, due to unusual or emergency circumstances, it may be necessary for the Library to close without prior notice. In this event or in case of other emergencies, unaccompanied children age 18 years or younger who cannot transport themselves must be able to reach a parent or responsible adult for immediate pick-up.
- The Library does not observe the same schedule every day. Parents or responsible adult caregivers should be aware of library closing times. If a child remains at the Library after hours, staff may make an attempt to contact a parent or responsible adult, but also may, immediately and without recourse, contact the Police, DCFS, or other appropriate government agency. *Staff WILL NOT transport a child nor will a child be allowed to sit in a staff person's vehicle.*
- The children's area of the Library is reserved for children, their parents or responsible adult caregivers, and adults interested in children's literature, such as teachers and college students. Out of concern for the safety of young patrons, adults who are unaccompanied by a child or children in the children's area of the Library may be questioned by staff, and may be asked to move to another area of the Library.
- If it is unsafe for a child to leave the building without an adult, that child should never be left unattended in the Library.

PARENTS AND ADULT CAREGIVERS, NOT LIBRARY STAFF, ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BEHAVIOR AND SAFETY OF THEIR CHILDREN WHILE ON THE PREMISES OF PEKIN PUBLIC LIBRARY.

*Questions related to this policy should be directed to the
Library Director or designee, (309) 347-7111, during regular business hours,
Monday – Friday, 9 to 12 AM, 1 to 5 PM*