



Mount Laurel
Library

LIBRARY POLICY

Child Safety

The public library is a unique institution that welcomes customers of all ages to use its facilities, services and resources.

Children and their safety are of great concern to libraries. We encourage families and youth to use libraries and, while doing so, also affirm parents' responsibility for their children's safety and upbringing.

- Children, like all library customers, are expected to behave appropriately.
- Parents and caregivers, not library staff, are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children in the library.
- An unattended child is a child of any age who is apparently unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver.
- Children who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves may not be left alone in the library and must be in good visual contact with a caregiver at all times.
- If the child is attending a library program, the parent/caregiver must not leave the building for any reason.

Parents and caregivers must be advised that libraries are public places. In libraries, as in all public places, "stranger danger" is a real concern. Library staff cannot prevent children from interacting with or leaving the library with persons who are not appropriate caregivers.

The library cannot be responsible for any consequences of caregivers forfeiting their responsibilities. Any youth who is unable to care for him/herself and who is left in the library without a guardian for any period of time and/or who is not picked up at closing time is considered abandoned by the Library as set forth in *New Jersey Statutes Annotated* 9:6-1:

Abandonment of a child shall consist in any of the following acts by anyone having the custody or control of the child: (a) willfully forsaking a child; (b) failing to care for and keep the control and custody of a child so that the child shall be exposed to physical or moral risk without proper and sufficient protection...

If further action is required, the matter may be referred to the Mount Laurel Police Department.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees: October 13, 2010