

Goffstown Public Library Unattended Children Policy

The Goffstown Public Library welcomes children of all ages to use and enjoy the facilities, collections and programming offered by the Library. The Library staff attempts to provide a safe, welcoming environment for children to select books and other materials and to attend Library programming. We do not provide childcare services; young children are not safe when left unattended. The staff cannot monitor if children are leaving the building with their parents or with strangers. For the safety of minor children and the enjoyment of all visitors using the Library we have developed a specific policy regarding unattended children.

1. The Goffstown Public Library and its staff do not assume responsibility for any child left unattended in the Library.
2. As used in this policy, the term “parent” or “caregiver” may include legal guardians or other persons having custody or control of a minor.
3. Children under the age of eleven may not be left unattended at the Library. A child is unattended if a parent or caregiver over the age of sixteen is not present with the child at all times while in the Library.
4. At the discretion of a caregiver, a child aged eleven to thirteen may be left unattended for the period of time needed to select materials, complete a homework assignment, read, or attend a program. The child must know how to reach the caregiver in case the need should arise. Children should not be left for longer than two hours.
5. Children aged fourteen and older may be left unattended in the library to select materials, complete a homework assignment, read, or attend a program. The child must know how to reach a parent or caregiver in case the need should arise. Children of this age group can be left for an indefinite amount of time.
6. All Library visitors are subject to the “Circulation Policy” concerning materials selection. Parents who wish to limit their own children’s materials should accompany the children to the library and supervise the borrowing process. Parents cannot rely on the library staff for such supervision. The Library and its staff do not assume responsibility for the materials chosen by unattended children.
7. All Library visitors are subject to the “Visitor Behavior Policy” concerning disruptive behavior. Parents are responsible for the behavior of minor children at all times, even if they are not in the Library with the child. Library staff does not serve *in loco parentis*, in place of the parent. If a child’s behavior is inappropriate for the Library, and they do not respond to appropriate guidance from Library staff, the parent will be contacted to remove the child from the Library. If the parent cannot be reached and the child’s behavior is deemed dangerous or unduly disruptive, the Goffstown Police Department may be called.
8. If a child is left at the Library without a way home one-half hour prior to closing time, Library staff may contact the child’s parent using information provided by the child, the cardholder database, or the telephone directory. If contacted, the parent will be told that their child must be picked up immediately. If the parent cannot be located or if a parent has not picked up

the child within one half hour, the Library staff may contact the Goffstown Police Department to take custody of the child.

9. Under no circumstances will a staff member take a child out of the Library or provide any transportation. No individual staff person is to be left alone in the Library or on Library property with a child after closing.

Reference Chart:

Children ages up to ten years old	Attended by responsible person aged 16+
Children ages 11-13	May be alone in Library, up to two hours
Children ages 14+	May be on their own in the Library

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