

East Kingston Public Library
Child Safety and Unattended Children Policy

The staff and trustees of the East Kingston Public Library hope that children who use our library will find our facility to be a warm and inviting place to develop a love of books, reading, and to participate in library programs. The East Kingston Public Library urges parents and caregivers to actively participate in their child's/children's library visits. The Library attempts to provide a safe environment. The happiness and safety of young children left alone at the library can, however, be a serious concern. While the library staff seeks to create a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere for children, the staff is not responsible to care for, or watch over, any child or children left unattended.

The East Kingston Public Library Trustees have established the following policies for unattended children in the library:

Behavior:

- Parents or caregivers are responsible for the behavior of children, not the library staff.
- Children aged 8 and under must be closely supervised by a responsible caretaker (a parent, guardian, sibling, or mature adolescent) while at the library. The caretaker must be at least 14 years old. Preschoolers must be accompanied by the caretaker when in the restroom.
- Children age 9 and over may use the Library unattended provided that their behavior is not disruptive. However, the parents or guardian are still responsible for their children's behavior and well-being when the child is at the library.
- If a child's behavior is deemed by the Library Staff as inappropriate for the library, and the child does not respond to appropriate guidance from the library staff, the parent will be contacted. If the parent cannot be reached the East Kingston Police Department will be contacted.
- Children under 8 may participate in a library program unattended as long as library staff are aware. Children may stay unattended for no longer than two hours. If coming to the library from the elementary school, the *After-School Program Permission Slip* must be filled out and submitted to the library *and* to the East Kingston Elementary School. Parents and/or guardians should also fill out the *Bus Permission Slip* and submit that to the Elementary School.

Closing Time:

- Parents should be aware of the closing time of the Library and should arrange to pick up their child/children before the Library closes. If the Library is closing and a parent or guardian cannot be located, or the parent cannot pick up the child in a reasonable time, the East Kingston Police Department will be contacted.
- Staff members are not permitted to remain after hours with an unattended child.
- Under no circumstances will a staff member take a child from the library or give a child a ride home.

If action is required: The Director will contact the child's parent or guardian to explain the library policy and why the action was required.

The following state laws apply: RSA 169-B: 41-43; RSA 169-B: 45; RSA 169-C: 3(1) and 3(XIX).

Date Approved: January 22, 2024

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the East Kingston Public Library