

Unattended Children

The Baker County Library welcomes and encourages library use by children. Providing quality materials and services to young people is one of our primary responsibilities. Parents and guardians are advised, however, that the Library is a busy, public place and that they are responsible for monitoring and regulating their children's behavior, safety, and welfare while on library premises. Although it is a Library priority to provide a safe and appropriate environment for visitors of all ages, the Library staff is not responsible for providing long- or short-term care for unattended children.

For the safety and comfort of both children and visitors of all ages, the Library recommends that a responsible adult/caregiver maintain audible and visible supervision of their children *under the age of ten* as they use the Library.

Children aged **ten** and older may use the Library unattended subject to the Rules of Conduct and policies of the Baker County Library. Caregivers who choose to leave a child unattended must first ensure that the child is capable of proper library behavior and of observing Library expectations for appropriate use of library materials. Caregivers who neglect to provide proper supervision of their child and regulate disruptive behavior may be asked to leave the Library with their child. Parents/legal guardians will be held responsible for damage to Library property caused by their children. Library staff members are required by law to report suspected child abuse to state agencies or local law enforcement.

Library staff members will be guided by this policy in situations, such as

- An unattended child is found frightened or crying in the Library
- An unattended child is perceived to be endangering him- or herself, or that another person in the library poses a perceived threat to the unattended child
- An unattended child exhibits inappropriate or disruptive behavior in violation of the Rules of Conduct
- An unattended child has not been met by a responsible caregiver at closing time

After evaluating the situation, Library staff members will make a reasonable attempt to contact the parent or guardian of an unattended child. In the event that the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the child will be placed in the care of the local Police Department.

Approved by the Board of Directors: 6/18/07

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