



Unattended Child Policy

[Revised by the Library Board of Trustees, 02/24/2020]

The San Mateo Public Library warmly welcomes children to visit and use the library. Library staff serves children by answering questions, assisting in the search for good books to read, providing materials to complete homework assignments and presenting special programs designed to foster a love of reading and using the library. It is, however, the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure their children's safety, welfare and appropriate behavior while in the library and on library grounds. Unlike at a school, library staff is not responsible for the direct supervision, safety or welfare of children at the library. Accordingly, if any of the situations below are encountered, staff will attempt to contact the parent/caregiver. If we are unsuccessful in this attempt, the child will be considered abandoned, and the San Mateo Police Department will be contacted to place the child in temporary protective custody.

- As a safety precaution, children under the age of 9 years cannot be left unattended in the library at any time without parental/caregiver supervision. If a child under the age of 9 years is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver and inform him/her of the policy. If the parent/caregiver cannot be located, the San Mateo Police Department will be called to assist.
- Caregivers for children at the library must be at least 12 years old.
- Caregivers are expected to stay within eyesight of the child/children they are responsible for attending to.
- Children 9 years of age and older may use the library on their own. However, parents/caregivers are responsible for the actions and well-being of their children. Library personnel are not responsible for the welfare and behavior of customers' children.
- Children behaving inappropriately will be informed of the rules; and if the inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be asked to leave the library. Depending on the infraction, library staff may also contact the parent/caregiver or police (if the parent cannot be reached).
- If a child is found to be unattended when the library closes, library staff will attempt to locate the child's parent/caregiver and if the parent/caregiver cannot be reached, the San Mateo Police Department will be contacted to assist.
- This policy also applies to teens, as all youths under 18 years of age are the legal responsibility of their parents. Teens are required to follow the Library Rules of Conduct. Teens who misbehave in the library will be informed of the rules; and if the inappropriate behavior continues, the teen (s) will be asked to leave the library. Depending on the infraction, library staff may also contact the parent/caregiver or police (if the parent cannot be reached).