

Policy Statement:

Pasadena Public Library System welcomes people of all ages to utilize its programs, facilities, collections and services. In order to ensure the safety and well being of children and young adults who use the library, and to ensure that the use of *The Children's Library* and *Teen Central* are consistent with the mission, vision and values of Pasadena Public Library System while maintaining an atmosphere of constructive library use, the following policy regarding unattended minors and the appropriate use of *The Children's Library* and *Teen Central* is adopted.

Rules & Guidelines***Use of The Children's Library***

The materials, services and equipment in the Pasadena Public Library System's *The Children's Library* are intended for the use of children, their parents and caregivers, and others needing children's materials and services for some specific purpose. All other customers are asked to use the adult areas of the library. Young Adults are asked to use *Teen Central*.

Use of Teen Central:

The materials, services and equipment in the Pasadena Public Library System's *Teen Central* are intended for the use of teens ages twelve through seventeen. Gaming equipment, computers and special programs are limited to participation and use by teens ages twelve through seventeen. All other customers are welcome to use the teen collection, but once material has been selected, they should use *The Children's Library* or adult areas of the library.

Unattended Minors:

Pasadena Public Library System defines an unattended minor as any young person under the age of eighteen who is unaccompanied by a responsible adult aged 18 or older, and who is unable to care for his or her self, or use the library responsibly.

Inappropriate and irresponsible behavior may include but are not limited to: 1) disruptive behavior, such as running, shouting, climbing, rude actions, horseplay, etc.; 2) verbal or physical abuse of staff or customers such as cursing, rude or demeaning comments, talking back to library staff or customers, hitting, biting, kicking, punching, teasing other customers, etc.; and 3) damage to property of the library or of customers such as breaking or ruining supplies or property, improper use of furniture or equipment, theft, vandalism, etc.

Parents or adult caregivers are legally responsible for the welfare and behavior of their children; the library is not responsible for unattended children. Library staff may refer children who are left unattended in the library to appropriate authorities including the police or child welfare agencies.

Children under age 8. Any child under the age of eight (seven years old or less) must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times. An exception exists for children attending a planned, scheduled library program without a parent or caregiver in the room. However, the parent or caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

Children age 8 through age 11. Older children ages eight through age eleven may need adult supervision to ensure their safety and to maintain appropriate behavior and responsible library use. Although they may be by themselves in the library, a parent or caregiver must be on the premises at all times. Staff members will use their judgment and discretion in determining whether or not an unattended child needs a parent or caregiver to provide supervision.

Young Adults ages 12 and up. PPLS recognizes that many young adults are responsible enough to be in the library without adult supervision. However, if library staff identifies behavioral issues or recognizes that a young adult cannot use the library responsibly on their own, staff may ask young adults to leave the premises. Additionally, parents may be contacted, and if continuous behavioral issues occur, a young adult may be required to have a parent or caregiver present while using the library or, in some cases a young adult may be banned or have library privileges suspended.

Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Library staff will ask children and young adults to comply with library rules or instructions. Children and young adults whose behavior is disruptive to library rules and instructions will be asked to leave the library grounds. Children will be given the opportunity to make a phone call to a parent or guardian to inform them of the circumstances. If a child is too young to leave the library by themselves, a parent or the police may be called to pick up the child. **(Police non-emergency number: 713-477-1221)**

At closing time or in the event of an emergency (closing for weather or a power outage), staff will assist unattended children and young adults in calling a parent or responsible adult to pick them up. If someone cannot be contacted within 15 minutes of a child or young adult being left alone or at the library's closing time, Public Service staff will call the police who will assume responsibility for the child or young adult. **(Police non-emergency number: 713-477-1221)**