



UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY

The Emerson Public Library encourages children of all ages to visit the Library and hopes they will find it a warm, inviting place to be. Programs and resources are offered to make the Library enticing, to help children enjoy their visit and to develop a love of books, reading and libraries.

The staff cannot know if children are leaving the building with parents/guardians or strangers. It is not the Library's intention to seek out unattended children, but rather to have a reasoned response prepared should a problem present itself. For the protection of children who visit the Library, the following policy has been established.

An UNATTENDED CHILD is defined as any child under the age of seventeen using the Library unaccompanied by a parent or responsible caregiver.

Children under 5 may visit the Library only in the company of a caregiver who shall remain present and visible to their child at all times, including when attending programs.

Children aged 5 – 8 may independently attend library programs but caregivers must remain on Library property during the program in case the child experiences separation anxiety, becomes ill, or displays inappropriate behavior during the program.

Children under 9 may not be left in the Library or on Library property without a caregiver, unless they are enrolled in 4th grade or higher in the Emerson Public Schools and walk to the Library after school. If a child under 9 years old is left unattended in the Library or on library property, the staff will attempt to contact their parents or caregiver by phone. If no parent or caregiver arrives within 15 minutes, the Emerson Police Department will be called.

Children aged 9 and older may visit the Library and attend programs independently. Unattended children must abide by the rules stated in the Library's Code of Conduct.

No child sixteen years or younger may be unattended in the Library a half hour before Library closing.

Library Emergency Closing

The Library will close due to emergencies because of inclement weather, power outages, etc. If the Emerson Schools close because of inclement weather the Library will also close. No child may be sent to the Library if the schools close early due to emergencies.

Normal or Emergency Closing

The Library closes at 5pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 8pm on Tuesday and Thursday and 3pm on Saturday. Parent/caregiver must have arrangements to pick up their child before closing.

NJSA 30:58-1-15 prohibits the Library from functioning as a child care center unless licensed by the State of New Jersey. Responsibility for the conduct of minors remains with the parent/guardian. All minors must leave the Library promptly at closing time. Staff cannot drive children home.