

*Hackley Public Library
316 W. Webster Avenue
Muskegon, MI 49440*

=== POLICY ===

UNATTENDED CHILDREN

1. **Safety**. Concern for the happiness and well-being of children using the library is fundamental to the library's service to them. While the library seeks to maintain a safe and secure environment, it must be recognized that this is a public building which all may enter. The library staff cannot take sole responsibility for the safety or care of a child.

2. **Behavior**. Although children are given special leeway because of their immaturity, all library patrons, including children, are expected to maintain appropriate behavior, keep noise within levels which do not interfere with the activities of others, and avoid actions which could injure themselves or others, damage property, or offend others. (See also policy 3005 "Conduct of Library Users").

Children who are behaving in a disruptive manner which the staff is unable to correct with suggestions, reprimands or refocusing of attention will be asked to leave the library. If children are unattended and too young to be expected to make their way home on their own, the Youth Services staff will attempt to locate a parent or responsible adult. If the adult cannot be located and expelling the child would jeopardize his/her safety, the police will be called to pick up the child.

3. **Children Age 3 and Under**. Children age 3 and under must be within visual contact of the accompanying responsible adult when in the library. If the noise or behavior of babies or young children interferes with the use of the library by others, library staff may request that adults take young children and babies to the lobby or to another area, or that they leave the library temporarily.

4. **Children Under Age 7**. Children under age 7 must be under the direct supervision of a responsible adult when in the library. An exception is made when children are attending a library program.

5. **Children Age 7 through 11**. Seven to eleven year olds may use the library unattended for an amount of time appropriate to their age and maturity. A suggested time limit for an unattended visit is 60 minutes. Children who become restless and disruptive in that amount of time should limit further their unattended time at the library.

6. **Children Age 12 through 17**. Children age 12 through 17 may use the library unattended.

7. Library Use During School Hours.

- A. Younger than High School Age. When children younger than high school age are in the library unattended by an adult during school hours, the schools will be contacted.
- B. High school Age. In general high school age young people will not be questioned if they are present in the library during school hours and if they are using the library appropriately. Library staff may contact the schools if it appears that the high school age young people are obviously skipping school.
- C. Suspended and Expelled. Library staff will confirm with the schools that young people present in the library during school hours have been suspended or expelled. Suspended and expelled students may stay in the library as long as they are behaving appropriately. They may use the computers and other library services following normal rules.

8. Closing Time. If unattended children are still in the building at closing time and are expecting to be picked up by a responsible adult, the Youth Services staff will attempt to reach the adult by telephone. If no one can be located within 15 minutes, the police will be called and asked to send an officer to pick up the child and take him/her to the police station. Two staff members will wait at the door for either police or the responsible adult. Staff will never take the child home or to another location. The responsible adult will then be notified in writing of the library's policy, hours of closing, and potential dangers to the child.

Approved May 15, 2007

Effective May 1, 1998 (Policy 3005.95)