

Category: Legal
Policy Number: 5-6
POLICY Name: Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults
Revision: 2.0

Purpose:

WPL welcomes children and vulnerable adults (i.e. persons of diminished mental or physical ability) to fully participate in programs and to enjoy library resources. This policy outlines the level of responsibility library staff will assume when children or vulnerable adults are left at the library unattended.

Policy:

A. Unattended Children

Library staff cannot assume responsibility for the safety and well-being of children left unattended in the library. WPL affirms the provisions of the Ontario Child and Family Services Act, RSO 1990, c. C.11, Section 79 (3) that requires that a person responsible for a child of less than sixteen years of age must provide for supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances.

Children nine years old and younger must be accompanied by an adult while in the library.

Children aged five and younger who are attending programs must remain within view of their caregiver or, if in the confines of a room during a scheduled program, are supervised by library staff during the time of that program only. However, caregivers are expected to remain in the building during the program in the event that the child is unable to continue their participation to the end of the program.

Staff, having confirmed that reasonable care has not been provided for a child, will attempt to contact the caregiver and ask that the child be picked up as soon as possible. In the event that a caregiver cannot be contacted within a reasonable timeframe, staff will speak to the caregiver upon their return. If several hours have passed and the caregiver cannot be contacted, or if there is a repeated pattern of the child being left unattended, staff will consult with the CEO or Deputy CEO who may refer the matter to the police or Family & Children's Services of Waterloo Region.

B. Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults after Library Closing

The Library has no legal obligation regarding the safety of library customers after closing hours. However, staff will assist the following persons who are waiting on Library premises for a ride and who may be at risk: children under thirteen years of age and vulnerable adults.

In-charge staff will remain with vulnerable persons until their ride arrives and will speak to the caregiver upon their return. In cases where the in-charge staff cannot remain, the in-charge may ask other staff to assist by remaining with them until the situation is resolved. If necessary, the police will be called to take charge of the person(s).

Compensation for overtime may be taken as per the Waterloo Public Library Staff Manual.

In both of the above circumstances (A and B), should there be a considerable wait for a caregiver to return, a standard Incident Report will be completed and filed. A follow-up letter may be sent to the parent, guardian or caregiver.

Revision Level	Revision Date	Change
1.0	June 28, 2006	Initial Release
2.0	July 27, 2015	Reviewed & Updated