

Havana Public Library District
Unattended Children Policy

Temporary Changes to This Policy

While the pandemic requires face masks and social distancing in public, the Havana Public Library District is temporarily amending this policy. During this time, all children under the age of 12 must be accompanied and supervised at all times by a parent or other responsible caregiver. In-person library programs have been suspended and large groups of children will not be permitted. Havana Public Library District follows the most recent COVID guidelines issued by the CDC and the Illinois Department of Health. Notice of these guidelines including any mask and social distancing requirements will be posted upon entry to the library. All patrons regardless of age are required to follow these guidelines.

Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children while in the Library. The staff of the Havana Public Library District is committed to help children with activities related to the Library. However, Library staff cannot, nor is it their responsibility, serve as babysitters, teachers, or disciplinarians. Violations of this policy are grounds for suspension of library privileges. Whenever advisable, the Library will notify the parent of incidents involving an unattended child.

Children under the age of eight must be accompanied and supervised at all times by a parent or other responsible caregiver. When the safety of an unattended child is in doubt, or the parent or responsible caregiver cannot be located, or if the Library is closing, Library staff is authorized to call the police and stay with the child until the police arrive.

From time to time, the Havana Public Library District schedules or provides programs which are designed and suitable for attendance by children without parental supervision. Such program announcements will so indicate, and if no indication is included, then supervision is required. When so indicated, if the parent or caregiver intends to be absent, they must leave word at the circulation desk as to their whereabouts and a phone number where they or a responsible adult can be contacted.

Children over the age of eight may use the Library unattended by an adult, subject to other Library rules and policies concerning behavior, conduct, and demeanor. If a child eight and older is not able to enter or leave the Library on their own, then they should not be at the Library without a parent or caregiver. All unaccompanied children must be able to provide an emergency contact's name and telephone number.

In the event a young person is still at the library 15 minutes after the library closes to the public, the police will be called to pick up the young person. Attempts will be made during that 15 minutes to reach parents, but in no instance will staff take young people home. Two staff members will stay with the child until the parents or police arrive

Sample Unattended Children Parental Notification Letter

Dear _____,

The Havana Public Library District has recently experienced an incident involving your child, in which he or she was on Library grounds unattended by you or a responsible caregiver. A copy of the Library's policy on Unattended Children is enclosed here for your attention. We ask that you review this policy and make every effort to follow it. We do not wish to suspend Library privileges for you or your family, but the safety of children as well as the proper operation of the Library is our first responsibility. If you have any questions regarding this policy or its enforcement, please contact the undersigned.

Very Truly Yours,

Board President or Library Director

*Approved by the Havana Public Library District Board, November 10, 2016
Amended and approved by the Havana Public Library District Board, June 26, 2020
Amended and approved by the Havana Public Library District Board, June 10, 2021
Amended and approved by the Havana Public Library District Board of Trustees, August 3, 2021*