

# Whittier Public Library

## Safe Child Policy

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The Whittier Public Library encourages and promotes children's use of the library. Our aim is to make our library facilities welcoming, educational, fun, and safe for children of all ages.

However, parents and/or guardians should be aware that the library is a public place and as such, is open to all members of the community. As in all public facilities, emergencies can occur and it is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to monitor the whereabouts and behavior of their children.

### Children Under 9 Years of Age

Children under 9 must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times. Children should not be left unattended while parents and/or guardians conduct their own business in the library. While story times are on, parents of preschoolers are free to browse within the library but should not leave the premises as their child might leave the story time in search of them.

### Children 9 Years and Older

Children 9 years of age and older may come into the library independently but should not be left unattended for substantial periods of time. If children are left unattended for extended periods of time, the parents and/or guardians will be contacted. If a child is unattended when the library closes and the library staff cannot locate a parent and/or guardian, the library staff is directed to arrange for the police to take responsibility for the child.

### Children Left Unattended During Open Hours

If it is determined that a child is lost or left unattended, a staff member will try to identify and locate the parent/caregiver by walking around the area, looking for parent/caregiver and informally asking for assistance and then paging the child's parent/caregiver if known, or the child's name, if known.

If, after making an attempt, the parent/caregiver has not been located, the staff member will call the police. They will explain to the child that no-one is in trouble but that we want to make sure they get home safely.

## Children Left Unattended at Closing Time

Children of under the age of 14 often study independently in the library. Parents and/or guardians are expected to make arrangements for their children to be supervised and, when necessary, to have rides home when the library closes.

If a child under the age of 14 is unattended when the library closes and the library staff cannot locate a parent and/or guardian, the library staff will arrange for the police to take responsibility for the child. (Staff will use their judgment and err on the side of caution for children and young adults over age 14 in these circumstances.)

Two staff members will wait with the child until a caregiver or police arrive.

## Child Reported Lost or Missing

If a parent/caregiver reports a child missing, staff will obtain the name, age and description of the child and then page staff to request assistance in locating the child or page the child (depending on his/her age). Staff will watch the exits and check all areas thoroughly as well as the outside perimeters of the library. If child is not located, staff will call the police.

## Emergencies

In case of a medical emergency involving an unattended child, the staff will call 911 for emergency assistance and then attempt to contact a parent and/or guardian, in that order.

**NOTE:** *Timelines and actions may vary with the maturity of the child, the time of year, the weather and staff availability. The goal is to be helpful and to keep library patrons safe.*