

BAKER FREE LIBRARY

Unattended Children Policy

The Baker Free Library welcomes children of all ages to use and enjoy the facilities, collections, and programming offered by the library. The library attempts to provide a safe environment for children to select books and other materials, and to attend library programming. However, young children are not safe when left unattended in the library. The staff cannot know if children are leaving the building with their parents or with strangers. For the safety of minor children and the enjoyment of all patrons using the library, please observe the following rules regarding unattended children:

1. The Baker Free Library and its staff do not assume responsibility for any child left unattended in the library.
2. As used in this policy, the term “parent” may include legal guardians or other persons having custody or control of a minor.
3. Children under the age of eleven may not be left unattended at the library unless that child is attending a library program that specifically states that participating children do not have to have a parent in attendance with them. A child is unattended if a parent or responsible adult over the age of fourteen is not present with the child at all times while in the library.
4. At the discretion of a responsible adult, a child age eleven to thirteen may be left unattended for the period of time needed to select materials, complete a homework assignment, read, or attend a program. The child must know how to reach the adult in case the need should arise. Children should not be left longer than two hours; the library does not provide child care services.
5. All library patrons, including children, are subject to the library’s Patron Behavior Policy concerning disruptive behavior. Parents are responsible for the behavior of minor children at all times, even if they are not in the library with the child. **Library staff does not serve *in loco parentis*, in place of the parent.** If a child’s behavior is inappropriate for the library, and he/she does not respond to appropriate guidance from library staff, the parent will be contacted to remove the child from the library. If the parent cannot be reached and the child’s behavior is deemed dangerous or unduly disruptive, the Bow Police may be called.
6. If a parent of an unattended child cannot be contacted or if a parent has not picked up a child within one half hour after being contacted, the library staff may call the Bow Police Department to take custody of the child.
7. If a child is left at the library without a way home at closing time, two library staff must stay with the child in the library. Staff must contact a parent to pick up the child. If a parent is reached, staff will wait with the child for one half hour. If a parent cannot be reached, or library staff have waited more than one half hour for a parent to pick up a child, staff must call the Bow Police Department to take custody of the child. Under no circumstances is one staff member to ever be alone in the library or on library property with a child after closing.

Approved by the Baker Free Library Board of Trustees on November 18, 2009.