

Armoral Tuttle Public Library Policy

Unattended and Vulnerable Children

A **child** (as defined by Idaho Statue Section 16-1602(10)) is a person under the age of 18 years.

An **unattended child** is a child who is using the public library unaccompanied by a caregiver.

A **vulnerable child** is any unattended child whose safety or well-being may be endangered or who is unable to care for him or herself.

A **caregiver** is a person accompanying a child who is responsible for monitoring the activities and managing the behavior of the child. A caregiver may be a parent, legal guardian, or another person assigned responsibility by a parent or legal guardian. Examples of caregivers include but are not limited to: parents, legal guardians, babysitters, daycare providers, teachers, relatives, tutors, mentors, counselors, etc.

Because children develop and mature at different rates, there is no particular age at which all children are ready to cope with the variety of circumstances they may face alone in the library. Therefore it is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to use their discretion in determining when their child is sufficiently mature and responsible to use the library unaccompanied by a caregiver (refer to [Idaho Statue Section 16-1602\(5\(a\)\(b\)\)external link](#)).

However, with that said, Elementary-age children should not be left unattended in the library for an extended amount of time, per the following guidelines. An extended amount of time defined by the Armoral Tuttle Public Library is, but not limited to 20 minutes.

Responsibility for children using the library rests at all times with the parent/legal guardian, not with library personnel. Library personnel do not act in place of parents. The library is not responsible for any consequences of parents/legal guardians not fulfilling their responsibilities.

We understand that at times parents/legal guardians will assign responsibility for the care of their child to other caregivers. In those situations, the assigned caregiver will be responsible for monitoring the activities and managing the behavior of the child and will determine if the child is sufficiently mature and responsible to use the library unaccompanied by an adult. If a problem arises that the caregiver is unable or unwilling to handle, the library personnel will contact the parents/legal guardians of the child.

Library staff will use their judgment and discretion to determine whether or not an unattended child is vulnerable or at risk. The following guidelines are provided to assist library staff in making that determination.

The child:

1. appears to need staff help beyond assistance with normal library services.
2. is involved in a situation that is potentially harmful to the health or safety of the child or others.
3. seems to be at risk from another person at the library.
4. is alone, frightened, and/or crying in the library.
5. is not picked up by closing time and needs assistance procuring transportation.
6. does not know or have the information necessary to contact a parent, legal guardian, or other responsible adult.
7. violates the customer behavior policy but is unable to leave the library alone.
8. must leave the library due to an unexpected emergency (storms, power outages, etc.) and needs assistance procuring transportation.

If a child is determined to be vulnerable, staff will attempt to locate the child's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver. If library staff cannot find the child's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, the Payette County Sheriff's Department will be notified and asked to assume care of the child. If any outstanding fees accrue from the Payette County Sheriff's Department, they will become the responsibility of the parents/guardians of the child. Library staff members are not permitted to transport children away from library facilities.

For any child remaining at closing:

1. Library staff will attempt to contact the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver of any child remaining at the library 15 minutes before closing.
2. If the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver is unable to pick up the child within 15 minutes of closing, the Payette County Sheriff's Department will be contacted and asked to assume care of the child.
3. If library staff are unable to contact the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver the library staff will wait up to 15 minutes after closing with the child or until local law enforcement arrives.
4. If the child is not picked up within 15 minutes, the Payette County Sheriff's Department will be contacted and asked to assume care of the child.