

Reading Public Library Youth Services Policy

Reviewed and Approved 12/16/2024

The Reading Public Library (RPL) recognizes that ultimate responsibility for the welfare and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/guardian or assigned chaperone. Though the Staff will always respond with care and concern, they cannot act in loco parentis nor can they assume responsibility for a child's safety and welfare, especially when the child is unattended.

Children under age nine (9) must be accompanied by an adult, defined as a person eighteen (18) years of age or older who is responsible for the child. The parent or caregiver must remain with the child at all times during the Library visit. The parent or caregiver must never leave the building without the child. Should the parent or caregiver choose to disregard this policy, the proper authorities will be called. If a parent is under the age of eighteen (18), that parent will be accorded the same duties, responsibilities, and expectations of an adult. Parents and caregivers are responsible for the behavior of their child. Should the child violate the Customer Behavior Policy, the parent will be expected to remove the child from the premises until the child can meet the guidelines established by RPL.

Children ages nine (9) to seventeen (17) may use the library unattended provided they adhere to RPL rules and policies. Should they choose to violate the rules, they will be asked to leave the premises. Per City School Time Curfew 188-201, school age children may not be in the library during school hours unless accompanied by a parent/guardian/caregiver. A librarian should be consulted about library use for home school or cyber school students.

RPL is not a licensed day care facility and cannot be used as such. Therefore, after four (4) hours, a child may be asked to leave the library.

In the event a child is present at closing time, every effort will be made to locate the parent/guardian or caregiver. If a responsible adult does not arrive within ten (10) minutes after closing time, the police will be called.

Safety and security for children and teens is of paramount importance to library staff. Adults in the children's area without children may be asked to use another part of the library. Adults and children under the age of twelve (12) in the teen loft may be asked to use another part of the library.

RPL has a Child Abuse Prevention Policy. All RPL staff and volunteers are Mandated Reporters as identified under Pennsylvania law. All RPL employees have the following clearance and training on file:

- PA Criminal Background Check
- FBI Fingerprint Clearance
- Child Abuse Clearance
- Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania

Policy History
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