



West Slope Library Unattended Child Policy

Adopted 04/18/2023

Purpose

At West Slope Library, children and families of all ages, races, genders, gender expressions, abilities, and sexual orientations are welcome and valued. We uphold the American Library Association's [Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors](#) statement and proactively reduce barriers to children's access to library resources whenever possible. We also must comply with relevant state law regarding child supervision, abuse, and neglect in the library, per [Oregon Revised Statute 419B.005](#).

Scope

- The scope of West Slope Library's Unattended Child Policy applies to children aged nine years old and younger.
- [Oregon Revised Statute 163.545](#):
 - "A person having custody or control of a child under 10 years of age commits the crime of child neglect in the second degree if, with criminal negligence, the person leaves the child unattended in or at any place for such period of time as may be likely to endanger the health or welfare of such child."





Policy

In compliance with [ORS 163.545](#), all children aged nine years old and younger must be supervised by a parent or responsible caregiver at West Slope Library. Unlike staff at schools or childcare centers, public library staff cannot legally act *in loco parentis*, or “in the place of parents.” Because the library is a publicly accessible building, staff cannot ensure the safety of an unattended child around other patrons or library equipment. Children who are ten years of age and older are legally allowed to access the library building unaccompanied by an adult or caregiver.

Procedure

If a West Slope staff member has an articulable basis to believe that a child who is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian in the library for 10 minutes or longer may be aged nine years old or younger, the staff member will connect with the child to verbally confirm the child’s age. If the child is 10 years old or older, the child may continue accessing library services. If the child is aged nine years old or younger, staff will work with the child to contact a parent or guardian to reunite them. When the child is reunited with their parent or guardian, West Slope staff will verbally communicate West Slope Library’s Unattended Child Policy to the caregiver and note the interaction in the staff incident log. If staff witness the child unaccompanied in the library on a subsequent occasion for more than 10 minutes, staff will again work with the child to contact their parent or guardian, and the Community Library Supervisor will provide the caregiver with a follow-up letter in writing, communicating the policy. If the incident occurs more than twice, it may result in temporary exclusions from the library for the patrons involved.

If a child remains unattended upon the library’s closing time and staff are unable to contact their parent or caregiver, staff will contact the Washington County Sheriff’s Office to reunite the child with their caregiver. In this scenario, two staff members will remain present with the child until Washington County Sheriff’s Office deputies arrive.

