

Unattended & Missing Children Policy

Baker County Library District (BCLD) welcomes families and children. This policy is intended to clarify expectations and requirements of caregivers and children in the library, and to provide guidelines in the event a child is left unattended, or reported lost or missing.

Parents and caregivers* should recognize that:

- Our libraries are busy, public places with limited staff resources designed to serve persons of all ages and viewpoints with a wide range of educational and recreational collections, programs and services.
- Parents or caregivers, and not library staff, are responsible for the behavior, safety and supervision of their children when using the library. The library does not have facilities or staffing to provide childcare.
- The library supports parents and caregivers in their authority of providing supervision and guidance of their own children's reading, viewing and listening choices.
- Staff are trained to provide information and recommendations on request, but may not assume the role of a parent in determining whether materials used by children and teens are "age appropriate", or when access restrictions are necessary.
- Parents may request an alert note on their child's library account for a generic, viewpoint-neutral, access restriction, but this applies only to checkout of items, not in-library access.

"Caregiver" means the person responsible for supervision and care of a child during the temporary absence of the parent or legal guardian or custodian.

I. RULES AND REGULATIONS—CHILD (age 0-9) LEFT UNATTENDED DURING OPEN HOURS

- A) Children aged 6 and younger must be accompanied and supervised at all times by a parent or responsible caregiver who is in the immediate vicinity and within line of sight of the child.
- B) The library does not consider anyone age 11 and younger to be a responsible caregiver.
- C) If a child aged 6 and younger is found unattended, library staff will accompany the child in order to find the caregiver. If the caregiver is not found a staff member will stay with the child until someone can be located via phone or other means. If the caregiver cannot be located within 15 minutes the staff member will call the appropriate legal authority. Library staff will not take or compel the child out of the building.
- D) Library staff cannot prevent a minor child from leaving the building.
- E) A library user having custody or control of a child under 10 years of age is expected to comply with ORS 163.545.

163.545 Child neglect in the second degree. (1) 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.

If staff determines that a child under the age of 10 is unattended for such a period of time as

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may be likely to endanger the health or welfare of such child, or the unattended child's behavior is in violation of the library's Code of Conduct, library staff will contact the parent and inform them they must not leave the child unattended. If the parent cannot be contacted, or does not arrive within fifteen minutes, the library staff will contact the appropriate legal authority.

Staff will consider the following criteria for determining if the child has been left unattended for such a period of time as may be likely to endanger the health or welfare of the child:

- More than 6 hours without food
- Child appears ill, extremely fatigued, or at imminent reasonable risk of suffering serious injury from exposure to weather
- Child requests frequent assistance from library staff for personal needs (i.e., restroom, food, medicine, etc.)

II. RULES AND REGULATIONS—CHILD (age 0-16) LEFT UNATTENDED AT CLOSING

- A) The Library District does not accept responsibility or liability for minors left at the Library after closing time. In the event that a minor is left at the Library at closing time, staff will attempt to contact a parent or caregiver. If a parent or caregiver is not available within fifteen minutes of closing, staff will notify the appropriate legal authority.
- B) The Library Use Restrictions Policy describes in further detail the sanctions and process that will apply if a person fails or refuses to appropriately supervise his/her child.

III. RULES AND REGULATIONS—CHILD REPORTED LOST OR MISSING

- A) When a child is reported as missing, the library manager, or designee, will implement "Code Adam" procedures:
1. Obtain a detailed description of the child, including age, clothing, and physical description.
 2. Inform all staff and volunteers present
 3. Assign all available staff and volunteers to search for the child, both inside and outside the building
 4. Monitor all exits
 5. Obtain an image from the library security system, if possible.
- B) If the child is not found within ten minutes, law enforcement is called.

IV. RULES AND REGULATIONS—CHILD (age 0-18) WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES

- A) Rules I - III are also applicable to a child under 18 years of age who has special needs or disabilities and requires a level of care that is above normal for the child's age, and to a vulnerable adult who is known, suspected, or reported to have:
- a. A cognitive impairment, such as dementia;
 - b. An intellectual or developmental disability; or
 - c. A brain injury.