

Title	Unattended Children and Dependent Adults in the Library		
Number	25/01	Date	June 18, 2025
Revised			
Statement of Purpose			
<p>The Fort Saskatchewan Public Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for patrons of all ages. Library staff cannot be responsible for dependents (children or dependent adults) who are left unattended in the Library. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of dependents in the library rests with the parent, guardian, or caregiver and not the Library staff.</p>			
Definitions			
<p>In Alberta, a child is legally defined as anyone under the age of 18.</p> <p>An unattended child is defined as a person 0-9 years of age who is without visible supervision by a parent, guardian or caregiver over 12. Visible supervision means that the parent, guardian, or caregiver is in the Library and aware of the child's whereabouts. Unattended can include a child who is visibly upset, crying, or appears to be lost and appears to be without a parent or guardian. It can also include a child who is out of view of the parent or caregiver and/or not actively engaged with the parent or caregiver.</p> <p>An unattended dependent adult is an individual who, due to disability or other circumstances, is unable to care for themselves or make independent decisions, and appears to be without the supervision or support of a responsible caregiver. This includes individuals who may seem distressed, disoriented, or lost.</p> <p>Caregiver: Anyone 12 years of age or older to whom the parent or guardian has given responsibility for the care of the child.</p> <p>For the purposes of this policy, children and dependent adults are collectively referred to as dependents.</p>			

Policy

1. Guidelines for Supervision:

- **Children 0-4 years old and dependent adults** must have a parent, guardian or caregiver with them at all times, including when participating in programs.
- **Children 5-9 years old** must have a parent, guardian or caregiver within visual contact in the building. If a child is in a program, parents must remain in the Library or designate an alternate adult in writing to stay in their place.
- **Children 10 years and older** are welcome to use the Library independently. Their behavior, like that of all patrons, is subject to the Library's Code of Conduct and Disruptive Persons Policy. Parents, however, remain responsible for their actions, whereabouts, and well-being. If a child in this age group is unable to leave the Library safely without an adult, they should not be in the Library alone. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency. Parents or guardians who enroll school-age children in a Library program must provide the Library with an alternate telephone number where they can be reached in case of an emergency involving the child.
- if the child is still in the Library at closing time, and the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the R.C.M.P. will be called

2. Children and dependent adults left unattended in the Library space:

Library staff are not responsible for actively determining if dependents have been left unattended or are leaving the Library without their caregiver. Staff will only act if a dependent is brought to their attention as needing their parent, guardian, or caregiver, and that person cannot be located in the Library. This may include dependents who are unruly, crying, lost, asking for their caregiver, or in obvious distress.

- 2.1 An attempt to learn the dependent's name and telephone number will be made by the Library staff.
- 2.2 The staff will call the parent/guardian.
- 2.3 If unable to reach a parent, the R.C.M.P. shall be called after a wait of approximately one hour.

If a parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be reached within approximately one hour, the R.C.M.P. will be called. If the dependent is

very young or appears severely distressed, staff may contact the R.C.M.P. immediately. If it is at or near closing time and a parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be reached immediately, the R.C.M.P. shall be called without delay. Staff members will remain with the dependent until the R.C.M.P. arrive. Staff will determine if the situation warrants completing an incident report.

2.4 Under no circumstances are Library staff to transport or take the dependent away from the Library building.

3.0 Conduct of Dependents in the Library

All patrons of the Library, regardless of age, are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner while on Library property and abide by the Library's Code of Conduct and the Disruptive Persons Policy. The responsibility for the behavior of dependents in the Library rests with the parent, guardian, or caregiver.

If a dependent's behaviour violates the Code of Conduct or Disruptive Persons Policy, staff may apply the progressive steps outlined in the Disruptive Persons Policy, including warnings and, if necessary, asking the dependent and/or their parent/caregiver to leave the Library. If the dependent is unattended, staff will follow the procedures in section 2.0 while also addressing the disruptive behaviour.

4.0 Duty to Report

Library staff are obligated by Alberta's Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act to report suspicions that a child needs protection. Concerns should be reported directly to Child Intervention Services.

Provincial Intake Line 1-800-638-0715 or 911 in the case of immediate danger. The duty to report is a critical aspect of child protection in Alberta, emphasizing that the safety and well-being of children are a community responsibility.

Approval

Signature



Nicole Starker Campbell
Board Chair