

Unattended Children Policy

Definitions:

- **Child or Children:** persons under the age of 12
- **Youth:** person/persons between the ages of 12 and under 18 years of age
- **Adult:** person 18 years or older
- **Caregiver:** individual over 18 who is responsible for child (ren)/youth (parent, legal guardian, grandparent, nanny, etc.)
- **Staff Member:** employee of Cortland Free Library

The Cortland Free Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and warm environment that encourages children to visit the Library, attend programs, and use our resources and collections. Library staff are available to help and support children. However, the Library cannot provide child care, supervise unattended children, or assume responsibility for the safety of the children. Parents/guardians/caregivers are responsible for the safety and behavior of their youth and children. The following has been put into place for the safety of all:

- Children under the age of 12 years may not be left unattended in the Library at any time.
- A parent or other adult responsible for a child must supervise that child while in the Library.
- The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children/youth in the Library rests with the caregiver and not with the Library staff.
- Children and youth are expected to behave appropriately and abide by the Library's *Rules of Conduct*. Parents/guardians will be notified of misbehavior of their child or youth. Library staff cannot act in loco parentis for any reason. Violation of this Unattended Children's Policy may result in suspension of library privileges for the family.
- Fifteen minutes before closing, Cortland Free Library staff will check with any youth to make sure their caregivers are aware the building is closing. Library staff may offer the library phone to give youth a chance to call their caregivers. If a child or youth is left unattended at closing time—whether it is our regular closing time or for an unforeseen reason—Library staff will follow the following procedure:
 1. If no ride has arrived at closing time, an attempt will be made to contact the caregiver of the child/youth.
 2. If contact cannot be made with the caregiver, staff will call the Cortland Police Department at 753-2811 and report that the child or youth was left unattended at the Library. Two Library staff members will wait for the police with the child/youth.
 3. Staff will record the caregiver's name, address, telephone number, and the child/youth's name while waiting for the police.
 4. The child will be turned over to the police officer who will reunite the child with their caregivers. The officer will be given a copy of the *Unattended Children's Policy* to give to the child/youth's caregiver.
 5. Under no circumstances may library staff offer a ride to an unattended child/youth.