



## Cortland Free Library

*Books are just the beginning!*

**Policy Category:** Public Space  
**Policy Title:** Safe Child and Youth Policy

**Need for Policy:** Cortland Free Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and warm environment for people of all ages and encourages children to visit the library, attend programs, and use our resources and collections. This policy is intended to help ensure safety for all.

### **Policy:**

Parents/guardians/caregivers are responsible for the safety and behavior of their youth and children. Library staff will not provide child care, supervise unattended children or youth, or assume responsibility for the safety of the children or youth.

### *General*

- Children ages 0-12 must be accompanied by their parent, guardian, or caregiver.
- Youth ages 13-17 may use the library unattended for an amount of time appropriate for their age and maturity, however parents, guardians, and caregivers are still responsible for their child's actions.
- Children and youth, as with all library patrons, are expected to abide by the Library's *Acceptable Patron Behavior Policy*.
- Violation of this policy may result in suspension of library privileges for the family.

### *Unattended Children and Youth at Closing Time*

Parents, guardians, and caregivers should be aware of library opening and closing times and make arrangements to transport children/youth by closing time. Under no circumstances may library staff offer a ride to unattended children or youth.

Fifteen minutes before closing, Cortland Free Library staff will check with any child or youth to make sure their caregivers are aware the building is closing. 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 this procedure:

1. If no ride has arrived at closing time, staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian/caregiver of the child or youth.
  - a. If the attempt is *successful*, two staff members will wait with the child for up to 15 minutes for the parent/guardian/caregiver to arrive.
    - i. If the parent/guardian/caregiver has not arrived by that time, staff will contact the police so that they can take control of the situation. Staff members will remain with the child/youth until the police take over or the parent/guardian/caregiver arrives, whichever is sooner.
  - b. If the attempt is *unsuccessful* or if the parent/guardian/caregiver has not arrived within 15 minutes, staff will call the Cortland Police Department and report that the child or youth was left unattended at the Library.
    - i. Two library staff members will wait for the police with the child/youth.
    - ii. The child or youth will be turned over to the police officer for further action.
    - iii. The officer will be given a copy of the *Safe Child and Youth Policy* to give to the child or youth's parent/guardian/caregiver.

**Approved: 6/15/2022**

Please note that this replaces the Unattended Children Policy.