

## PAULINE HAASS PUBLIC LIBRARY

### **POLICY: Unattended Children**

Adopted by Library Board: April 22, 2015

To protect children using the library and to promote appropriate behavior, the Pauline Haass Public Library Board of Trustees has established the following policy.

1. Parents are responsible for the safety of their children while on Library property. Parents are advised that the Library is a large and busy public place, accessible to all, and staff cannot be responsible for children.
2. **Children age five and under** must be accompanied by an adult or responsible teenager at all times and in all areas of the building including the Children's Area and the restrooms. Parents of preschool children attending storytime must remain in the building during the program.
3. **Children ages six and seven** may be left unattended in a library-sponsored program or in the Children's Area for a short time, if an adult or responsible and attentive teenager who accompanied them to the library is in the building and readily available.
4. **Children age eight and over** are welcome with or without a parent at all times provided they practice appropriate behavior regarding language, respect for others and respect for library equipment and property. When children behave inappropriately the following procedures will take place:
  - (a) The first time an unattended child behaves inappropriately, staff will give the child and the parent(s), if present in the building, a verbal warning, including the consequence for continued inappropriate behavior.
  - (b) The second time that a child behaves inappropriately during the same visit, he or she will be asked to leave for the remainder of the day. Staff will make clear to the child that he or she will be welcome to return and start fresh on another visit. If a parent is in the building, he or she will be included in this discussion.
  - (c) In cases of repeated inappropriate behavior, the library will notify the parent of the child's behavior and require that the child be accompanied in the library by a parent or caregiver at all times, for a period of one month.
5. **Any child** regardless of age who requires continual staff intervention must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver at all times.

6. If, when the library closes, an unaccompanied child has not been picked up, staff members will determine whether the child may reasonably be left alone outside the building. This decision will be based on factors such as:

- Child's age and perceived maturity
- Information about whether an adult is on the way to pick up the child
- Time of day, and amount of daylight
- Weather
- Suitability of child's clothing to weather
- Presence of others in the area

If the determination is made that the child should not be left alone, two staff members will remain with the child and personally attempt to contact the parent or caregiver. If the party cannot be reached, or fails to arrange to pick up the child within a short, reasonable amount of time, law enforcement personnel will be contacted for advice and assistance. At no time will staff give a child in this situation a ride home in the staff member's vehicle.

Adopted by Library Board: October 6, 1996  
Revised by Library Board: August 9, 2000  
Revised by Library Board: December 15, 2004  
Revised by Library Board: December 19, 2007  
Reviewed by Library Board: October 20, 2010  
Reviewed by Library Board: April 22, 2015