



## **Pelham Public Library Unattended Children's Policy**

**Date of Board Approval: April 22, 2015**

### **Definitions:**

For the purposes of this policy:

A "parent" is any person who is either the natural, adoptive, or foster parent of the child or legal guardian of the child.

A "caregiver" is anyone over 12 years of age to whom the parent has given responsibility for the care of the younger child.

**Intent:** Pelham Public Library welcomes and encourages children to visit, use the library's resources and services, and attend library programs. Staff members are available to assist children with library services. While we always strive to make the library a safe place, the responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent or caregiver and not with the library personnel. Library staff cannot supervise children or function as a substitute for daycare for unattended children.

**Guidelines:** Children 8 years of age and under may not be left unattended in the library. They must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver at all times. Children shall be considered "attended" as long as they are in sight of the parent or caregiver. An exception would be children attending a story time or other library programs without a parent/responsible caregiver in the room. However, the parent or caregiver must remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

**Unattended Children:** If children 8 years of age and under are found in the library unattended by a parent or responsible caregiver, library staff will attempt to locate the parent or responsible caregiver in the building. If no parent or responsible caregiver is located in the building, library staff will attempt to contact the parent. If the parent is unavailable, the local police department will be called.

Parents will be called if a juvenile under the age of 14 is left at the library at closing time. If the parent is unavailable, the local police department will be called.

The library is not responsible if children leave the library unattended.