

TEINERT MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Unattended Children Policy

APPROVED BY	DATE
Teinert Memorial Library Board	November 09, 2022
Bartlett City Council	November 14, 2022

Purpose of Policy

The Teinert Memorial Library is a public facility of the City of Bartlett that offers vital, enriching services and materials to citizens and visitors of all ages. Children are particularly encouraged to enjoy the library with their parents and families. The library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and friendly environment for all library visitors.

The safety of children in the library is a serious concern. Unattended children can become frightened or anxious. An unattended child might encounter hazards or dangers that could be circumvented with adult supervision. An unattended child might also become bored or frustrated and act inappropriately in the library. Parents who leave their children unattended at the library are exposing their children to potential harm and may themselves be committing an offense un the **Texas Penal Code**, section 22.041c.

Rules

The library does not provide care or supervision of children and does not accept responsibility for children in the library. Parents or legal guardians are responsible for children’s safety and behavior in the library. To ensure a positive experience for children visiting the library, the following rules have been developed:

- Children 8 years old and younger must be accompanied by a parent, a responsible adult or designated caregiver of 16 years or older.
 - Young children 8 years old and younger should not be left alone in a different area of the library from their parent, adult, or caregiver. Close proximity is required.
- Children of any age with mental, physical, emotional or behavior problems which necessitate supervision must be accompanied by a parent or adult (18yrs) caregiver at all times.
- Children habitually left unattended for extended periods of time are an unacceptable use of the library. The library is not a daycare facility. Children of any age should not be left in the library to the extent that they are missing meals, have no responsible adult to contact or have no means to get home independently.
- Children of all ages must adhere to the same standards of conduct as required of all patrons (see **Code of Conduct** and all other library policies). Refusal to follow library rules will result in individuals being asked to leave, whether or not parents or caregivers are present. Staff members reserve the right to notify parents, guardians, or the Bartlett Police Department as they deem necessary.

- The Children’s Area of the library is reserved for children, their parents or responsible caregivers, and adults interested in children’s books. Out of concern for the safety of young patrons, adults who are unaccompanied by a child or children in the Children’s area or are not using the area for the purpose intended, may be questioned by staff, and may be asked to move to another part of the library.
- Parents and guardians should be aware of the library hours and make arrangements to meet or transport children under the age of 16 by closing times.
 - Youth without their own phones will be given the opportunity to contact their parent or caregiver for a ride home.
 - Staff will not transport children under any circumstances, ever.
 - If a child’s parent or caregiver cannot be reached, has not picked up the child after a reasonable period of time, library staff will turn the child over to the custody of the Bartlett Police Department.

Parents or guardians in violation of this policy may receive a copy of this policy or a letter from the library. Repeat offenders of this policy can lead to being banned from the library and a report sent to Child Protective Services.