Bayonne Public Library Unattended Youth Policy

The Bayonne Public Library encourages children of all ages to visit the Library and strives to make the Library a friendly and inviting place to be. Programs and resources are offered to make the Library a fun place for children to develop a lifelong love of reading and learning. The Library, however, is a public space open to people of all ages and interests. It is not equipped - nor is it the Library staff's role - to provide long- or short- term childcare services. Out of concern for the safety and well-being of children, the Library has created the following policy to guide parents and staff about children's use of the Library.

Responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children using the Library rests with the parent(s), regardless of whether the parent is present in the Library with the child. References in this policy to “parent” shall include all biological, adoptive, step & foster parents, legal guardians, and any other persons with legal parental authority over a child.

Children 9 years of age and younger must be accompanied and supervised by a caregiver (age 16 or older) at all times while in the Library. If a child is attending a Library program for children and the staff member responsible for the program agrees, then the caregiver must be in the Library, but need not accompany the child to the program. If a child is found unattended, staff will try to locate the parent or caregiver in the building. If neither can be found within fifteen (15) minutes, staff shall call the phone number associated with the child’s library card. If no contact is made, the Library will call the Bayonne Police Department to take responsibility for the child.

Children aged 10 and over may be in the Library without a caregiver, and are expected to obey the Patron Code of Conduct. If a child is not following the Patron Code of Conduct, the Library may ask the child to leave and/or contact the child’s parent(s).

Parents should ensure all children have contact information for a responsible caregiver in case of emergencies on file with the Library and with the child at all times. In the event of an emergency, Library staff will attempt to contact that child’s parent or caregiver based on whatever contact information is available.

Teachers, daycare providers, or other youth leaders may not leave groups of students unattended in the Library regardless of the age of the students.

A child of any age who has a medical condition that requires monitoring by another individual must not be left alone in the library. A responsible parent, guardian, or caregiver must be in attendance in the same department of the library as the child and must maintain an awareness of the child or teen’s location and activity at all times.

Unattended Youth at Closing Time

The Library closes promptly at the posted closing times. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child(ren) is/are picked up from the Library prior to the Library’s scheduled closing time.
Parents should be aware of the Library’s hours and keep in mind that those hours may change due to holiday schedules or unanticipated circumstances, such as power outage, inclement weather, or other emergency. Parents are expected to ensure their children know what to do in the event the Library needs to close early.

If a child is alone at closing time, staff will attempt to call or assist the child in calling the parent to come pick up the child. If no one can be reached, and the child remains in the Library for ten (10) minutes past closing time, staff will contact the Bayonne Police Department, and two (2) staff members will remain with the child until the Police arrive. Once the Police take charge of the child, the Library’s involvement with the child will end for that day.

Adopted by the Bayonne Public Library Board of Trustees on 9/5/23.