

Unattended Child Policy

Updated: July 22, 2024

The Pelham Public Library welcomes children and adults. A collection of children's material is available as are numerous activities for children. However, the library does not provide childcare services. It is impossible for library staff to monitor the comings and goings of children as well as recognize if a child leaves with an adult other than a family member or designated caregiver. Due to a concern for, above all, the safety of children while on the library premises; the Pelham Public Library has drawn up the following to serve as rules and regulations in regard to children at the library.

1. Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by someone 16 years or older while in the library. Children 6 and under must always be directly supervised by a caregiver.
2. Children under the age of 14 may not be dropped off to attend a library program and picked up at a later time including but not limited to story hour, summer reading program, or any other program for children.
3. It is not acceptable for children under the age of 14 to be left at the library under the supervision of a sibling who is less than 16 years old.
4. Children 14 years or older may be at the library unattended as long as they exhibit appropriate library behavior.
5. Inappropriate behavior includes but is not limited to loud talking, offensive comments directed at library staff or other library patrons, interference with other library patrons' use of the facility, running, misuse or abuse of library materials or equipment, and failure to observe courteous behavior to other library patrons. If a child exhibits inappropriate behavior, the parent of the child will be contacted to take the child home. Failure to follow appropriate library behavior will result in library staff instructing parents that their child may not be left unattended at the library even if the child is 14 years old or older. Continued inappropriate behavior may result in the loss of library privileges.
6. Children under the age of 18 may not be left alone on library property at closing time.
7. If a child is left at the library after closing time, at least two library staff members will wait with the child for twenty minutes while trying to reach the parents. After twenty minutes the Pelham Police Department will be called to take the child and await the arrival of a parent.
8. Parents arriving to pick up a child who has been left at the library after closing time will be asked to sign an incident report and will be informed that should this inappropriate

behavior recur; the Shelby County Department of Human Resources will be called to intervene.

9. Children may not be left unattended in parked cars in the library parking lot. The Pelham Police Department will be called if such an incident comes to the attention of library staff and the child appears to be in any danger.