



**BENBROOK LIBRARY DISTRICT
CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY
*Approved May 2022***

The Benbrook Library District welcomes children to use its facilities and services. However, the responsibility for the care, safety and behavior of children using the library rests with the parent/guardian or caregiver. A caregiver must be at least 12 years of age. For the purposes of this policy, the terms “child” and “children” shall mean any person under the age of 12.

Section 1. Supervision of Children

Library staff members have many duties and cannot supervise children nor act as a substitute for daycare. Parents and legal guardians are unconditionally responsible for the behavior of their children.

Children aged 7 and under must have a parent or caregiver within the library facility unless the children are participating in a library program where staff are supervising the children. Parents or caregivers for those age 7 or under who do not attend the program with the child should remain in the building. Parents are still responsible for the actions and care of their children.

Children aged 8 – 12 may use the Library unattended for no more than three hours. Staff will take note of any disruptions caused by children who apparently are unaccompanied. Children using inappropriate behavior will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child shall be asked to leave the Library. If a child in this age group is unaccompanied by an adult or appropriate-aged caregiver, staff will follow the directions below for children found on Library premises without a parent or caregiver. Individual library staff may not take responsibility for the care of a child of any age. The failure by a parent, guardian or child to comply with any Library policy may result in the suspension or termination of such parent’s, guardian’s and/or child’s Library privileges.

Section 2. Abandoned Child

If a child is found without a parent or caregiver, Library staff will make a reasonable effort to contact the parent or caregiver who is not in the Library to come and pick up the child. Staff will express the Library's concern for the child's safety and explain the Children in the Library Policy.

If the parent or caregiver cannot be located within 30 minutes, Library staff will contact the Benbrook Police. Staff will notify the Library Director that police have been called.

If a parent or caregiver cannot be reached or does not arrive within 15 minutes of closing, Library staff will call the Benbrook Police to pick up the child. Library staff will notify the Library Director that police have been called.

At least two library staff members will remain with the child until the parent, caregiver, or police arrive. This is compensated time for the two staff members who remain with the child.

A note will be left on the Library door stating "Unattended child is in the custody of the Benbrook Police, 1080 Mercedes Street, 817-249-1610 " once the child is in the care of the police. Names will not be stated on the sign. Library staff will not transport any child from the Library to another location. Library staff do NOT have any responsibility to report persons who seem to be truant. Library staff do not serve in the role of parent or police. Truancy is a school problem, not a library problem.