

# Emma Humphrey Memorial Library

## Unattended Children Policy

The Vale Library welcomes and encourages Library use by children. However, the Library staff is not responsible for providing long or short term care for unattended children. **CHILDREN AND UNDER 10 YEARS OF AGE MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT/GUARDIAN** (accompanied defined as “within sight”). It is strongly recommended that all children under 18 are accompanied by someone over the age of 18 who can take responsibility should an emergency occur. If a child under 10 years of age is left unattended then statute ORS 163.545 will apply.

ORS163.545 Child neglect in the second degree:(1) A person having custody or control of a child under 10 years of age commits the crime of child neglect in the second degree if, with criminal negligence, the person leaves the child unattended in or at any place for such period of time as may be likely to endanger the health or welfare of such child. (2) Child neglect in the second degree is a Class A misdemeanor.

Children aged 10 and older may use the Library unattended subject to the Rules of Conduct and Policies of the Emma Humphrey Memorial Library. Caregivers who choose to leave a child unattended must first ensure that the child is capable of proper Library behavior and of observing Library expectations for appropriate use of Library materials. Caregivers who neglect to provide proper supervision of their child and regulate disruptive behavior may be asked to leave the Library with their child. Parent/legal guardians will be held responsible for damage to Library property caused by their children. Library staff members are required by law to report suspected child abuse to state agencies or local law enforcement as said in statute ORS 419B.010.

Under ORS 419B.010, Library staff are mandatory reporters of child abuse. Library staff is to report, if known, names and addresses of the child and parents or other persons caring for the child, the age of the child, the nature and extent of the abuse, including any evidence of previous abuse, the explanation given for the abuse, and any other information.

Library staff members will be guided with their discretion by this policy when the following occurs:

- Child is unattended
- An unattended child is found frightened or crying in the Library
- An unattended child is perceived to be endangering him or herself, or that the person in the Library poses a perceived threat to the unattended child
- An unattended child exhibits inappropriate or disruptive behavior
- An unattended child has not been met by a responsible caregiver at closing time

After evaluation of the situation, Library staff will make reasonable attempts to contact the parents or guardian of an unattended child. In the event that the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the child will be placed in the care of the local Police Department.