

Hamburg Public Library Unattended Children Policy

Hamburg Public Library welcomes children of all ages to use its materials and services.

While in the library and on library grounds, the general responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children lies with parents/guardians or caregivers. Staff members cannot/will not take responsibility for the care, safety and behavior of children nor act as a substitute for daycare. Regardless of any child's age, parents/guardians are responsible for damage to library property caused by children in their care, as well as cleaning up library premises and materials to leave the library as they found it.

For the purposes of this policy, a caregiver is defined as an individual aged 14 or over who is assuming responsibility for a younger child with the permission of the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). This may include, for example, siblings, babysitters, or teachers.

As a public library, Hamburg Public Library is mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to report suspected child abuse.

1. Children under the age of 8 must be accompanied and directly supervised at all times by a parent, guardian, or other responsible caregiver. If a child in this age group is found unaccompanied, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/guardian and inform him/her of this policy. If the parent/guardian cannot be found, the Hamburg Borough Police Department will be called for assistance.
2. Children age 8 or older may be in the library unaccompanied for a reasonable period of time if checking out books, doing research or homework, or are otherwise legitimately engaged in library activities. However, library-appropriate behavior is expected, and parents/guardians are still responsible for the actions of the child.
3. The library staff is not responsible for any child who is left unaccompanied.

4. The library staff is not responsible for preventing children from leaving the library or its grounds.
5. Patrons with mental, physical, or emotional needs which render supervision necessary must be accompanied by a suitable caregiver at all times, regardless of age.
6. Children are subject to the same Community Agreement as other patrons and are subject to the same consequences, including being asked to leave the library.
7. The library is not responsible for supervision of unaccompanied children prior to opening or after closing. Parents/guardians should be aware of the library's posted hours and make suitable arrangements. When the safety of an unaccompanied child is in doubt, or if the library is closing and a parent, guardian, or other caregiver cannot be located, library staff is authorized to call the Hamburg Borough Police Department and two members of the staff will stay with the child until the police arrive.
8. Violations of this policy are grounds for suspension of library services. The Library Director will have the final determination if a child may use the library unaccompanied.