

Unattended Children Policy

The Pelham Library is a public facility that offers services to a wide range of citizens, and children are especially welcome. The library has the responsibility to provide an environment that is safe and comfortable for every patron who is appropriately using its services and facilities. Children and teens are generally expected to adhere to the same standards of patron conduct expected of adults as outlined in our Behavior Policy. Parents, guardians, or assigned chaperones are responsible for the behavior of their children while in the library.

Because the Pelham Library serves both the Pelham Elementary School and, at times, the Pelham Afterschool Program, we are particularly careful to avoid situations where supervision is ambiguous. Because of this relationship, and because the Pelham Library cannot act *in loco parentis*, we are very careful to avoid situations where the Pelham Library might be perceived as liable for a child's safety. Therefore:

- The Pelham Library is not to be used as a substitute for the Afterschool Program.
- Children who have not yet completed 6th grade, except under exceptional situations that have been pre-arranged between the School and the Library (for example, a one-time brief parent-teacher conference), are never to be dismissed to the library after school to await pickup.
- Children who have not completed 6th grade should also never be in the Library unattended during the school day or while afterschool is in session.
- Children who have not completed 6th grade may, if prior arrangements have been made between the Library and the parents and the child has permission noted on the parent's account, be allowed to use the library unattended on weekends, during the summer, or during school vacations provided they adhere to the Library Behavior Policy and are able to come and go on their own.
- The Library cannot be responsible if an unsupervised child leaves the library, either alone or in someone else's company. Library staff cannot act *in loco parentis* and do not monitor the comings and goings of patrons.
- Unattended children who are behaving in an unsafe or disruptive manner will be asked to leave the library (see the Library Behavior Policy). If the child refuses to leave or a parent cannot be contacted, the library staff will be forced to contact the Pelham Police.
- Children who have not been picked up at closing time will be given the opportunity to call a parent. The Pelham Police will be notified concerning children who are not able to reach a parent.
- Under no circumstances will staff transport children in a vehicle or accompany them home.

Approved by Library Trustees, May, 2026

Trustee Chair