

Bedford Public Library

Children's Area and Unattended Policy

Purpose of the Policy

The Bedford Public Library endeavors to provide a welcoming, pleasant, and safe environment for all Library users. Parents are responsible for the well-being of their children who are visiting the Library or using the Library services.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and as defined in Chapters 101.003 and 152.102 of the Family code of the State of Texas, a child is any person under eighteen years of age.

A parent or guardian is a parent, grandparent, relative, legal guardian or another adult appointed by the parent to care for a child.

Policy Statement 1

The Children's Area is reserved for the use of children.

Regulations

- 1.1 Adults unaccompanied by a child may use the Children's Area only if they are looking for materials to check out and must leave the room once they have located the items.
- 1.2 Adults unaccompanied by a child are prohibited from using the Family Restroom.
- 1.3 Adults unaccompanied by a child may not use the Children's Room to lounge. Any adult found in the Children's Room not supervising a child or browsing for materials to check out will be asked to leave immediately.
- 1.4 Patrons on the sex offender registry are not permitted to enter the Children's Area.
- 1.5 Children's computers are reserved for children. A parent or appropriate caregiver wishing to use a computer alongside his/her child may request a guest pass at the Children's Information Desk.

Policy Statement 2

Parents should encourage their children to respect library property and the rights of others who use the library in regard to play, noise and safety. Although the library is a fun place for children, playground behavior is not appropriate in the library building. The library reserves the right to limit the use of the library by children and parents who, in the judgment of the library staff, are infringing upon the rights of other library users with inappropriate behavior.

Regulations

- 2.1 The Children's Area should be used only for its intended purposes, therefore, disruptive behavior, such as running, shouting, climbing, rude actions, horseplay, or cursing is not permitted.
- 2.2 Verbal or physical abuse of staff or customers such as cursing, rude or demeaning comments, talking back to library staff or customers, hitting, biting, kicking, punching, teasing other customers is not permitted.

- 2.3 Disruptive children will be asked to leave the library. Staff will permit the child to call a parent. Depending on the severity of the situation, staff may call the police.
- 2.4 Vandalism, theft or damage of library property or to library grounds is a legal matter and the police will be notified.
- 2.5 Infant bottles are allowed for children under the age of 1.
- 2.6 Water bottles are allowed in the Children's Area, but not near the computer equipment.

Policy Statement 3

Parents are responsible for the well-being of their children who are visiting the Library or using the Library services. The Library staff does not act "in loco parentis". The Library is a public building. Any public place may be dangerous for a child who is left unattended even for brief periods of time. In addition, the Library is not designed nor licensed to provide childcare.

Regulations

- 3.1 The Library assumes no responsibility for children left unattended on the Library premises. The Library staff is not authorized to act in place of parents. Staff members are responsible for assisting all Library customers and cannot adequately monitor unattended children.
- 3.2 To promote the safety of children, the Library expects parents, or a responsible caregiver, to stay with children in their care in the Library. The parent or caregiver is asked to remain within sight and conversation distance of children age 7 and under.
- 3.3 Parents or guardians of children of any age who have special needs because of disabling conditions such as impaired physical or mental ability, disruptive behavior, emotional problems, short attention span, incomplete social skills, etc. must remain with their children at all times while they are in the Library.
- 3.4 Parent-designated caregivers, such as teen siblings, must demonstrate that they are willing and capable of supervising their younger charges or the Library will consider the child to be unattended and will contact the parent/guardian or the Bedford Police Department. The parent assigned care-giver must be at least 13 years of age.
- 3.5 Children may attend a planned, scheduled library program without a parent or caregiver in the room. However, the parent or caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.
- 3.6 Sudden emergencies may occur in the library and in such cases the Library assumes no responsibility for an unattended child. Parents, guardians, or caregivers should be sure their children know what to do or where to go when the library closes.
- 3.7 Library staff will assist children who appear unattended or in distress in the Library by attempting to contact their parents or caregivers either within or outside the Library. If a parent or appropriate caregiver cannot be located, the Library will place the child in the care of the Bedford Police Department.
- 3.8 Children habitually left unattended for long periods of time are an unacceptable use of the Library.
- 3.9 When a staff member observes suspected abuse or neglect on the part of a parent or responsible caregiver, staff will contact the police, social services, or another agency to report a child in danger at the Library.
- 3.10 As in all public places, "stranger danger" is a real concern. Library staff cannot prevent children from interacting with or leaving the library with persons who are not the appropriate chaperone.
- 3.11 Any time young children are left unattended in the library, staff will attempt to discuss this policy with the parent/caregiver.
- 3.12 The Code of Conduct and Responsibilities Policy apply to the Children's Area.

Policy Statement 4

Parents or designated caregivers must pick children up at least 5 minutes before the Library's posted closing time.

Regulations

- 4.1 Ten to thirty minutes before closing, a child will be allowed to call the parents.
- 4.2 Older children or teens who walked or rode (bicycle, skateboard) to the Library on their own and who expect to go home the same way may be allowed to proceed unless circumstances make it unsafe to do so. An example would be extreme weather.
- 4.3 If the parent or caregiver, cannot be reached or if the adult does not arrive at the library within fifteen minutes after closing, the staff will contact the Bedford Police Department.
- 4.4 Two staff members will remain with the child until the responsible adult or Police personnel arrive.
- 4.5 Library staff will post a note on the front door for the adult/caregiver indicating the action taken, police non-emergency phone number and directions to the Bedford Police Department.
- 4.6 Under no circumstances will a Library staff member transport the child in their vehicle.

Staff Procedure for Handling Unattended Children (Minors)

1. The Library Staff assigned to the Youth Information Desk will make a tour of the Library 30 minutes before closing, informing each minor that the Library will be closing in 30 minutes. The staff will ask minors if transportation arrangements have been made and offer to call parent/caregiver.
2. Youth staff is responsible for checking the outside entrance for unattended children before leaving.
3. If the minor has not been picked up at closing library staff will attempt to contact the parent/caregiver. The unattended minor may wait in the Library Lobby. Two staff members will wait with the minor. Two staff members should be present with the minor at all times. **Under no circumstances should a staff member remove the minor from the Library premises.**
4. If library staff is unable to contact the parent/caregiver within 15 minutes after closing, or if the child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the time the parent/caregiver has been contacted, the Bedford Police will take custody of the minor(s) for their safety. One of the staff members will call Dispatch at extension 2127, ask for the Duty Patrol Supervisor and report that the Library is closed and an unaccompanied minor is still on Library premises.
(Reference: Texas Penal Code §22.041--abandoning or endangering a child.)
5. After an officer has arrived, a staff member will report to the officer the status of the situation: e.g. parent/caregiver could not be reached. The responding officer will take the minor(s) to the Law Enforcement Center, 2121 L. Don Dodson Drive in Bedford **if unable to contact a parent/guardian**. After the Bedford Police take custody of the minor(s), staff will complete the Door Notification and Incident Report
6. The Door Notification paperwork should be completely filled out. Fill in appropriate closing time, **use minor(s) first name(s) only**, and sign the paperwork. Place the notification paperwork on the **inside of the Lobby doors**. Place copies of the "Your Child and the Bedford Public Library" brochure on the **outside of the Lobby doors**. Door notification paperwork is available at all public service desks and in the policy section of the website.
7. A call or email should be sent to the Library Manager and the Managing Director of Community Services.
8. After the Door Notification and brochure are in place the Library staff will leave.

The Bedford Public Library closed at _____.
The Bedford Police have taken custody of,
_____ for their safety.

(First Name Only)

You may pick them up at the Bedford Law Enforcement Center (LEC) at **2121 L. Don Dodson Drive**. The LEC is located east of Central and directly across from the Post Office.

The phone number at the LEC is 817-952-2127.

Library Staff

Bedford Public Library
2424 Forest Ridge Drive
Bedford, TX 76021
817-952-2350

Date and Time

Library Manager
Maria Redburn
817-952-2332

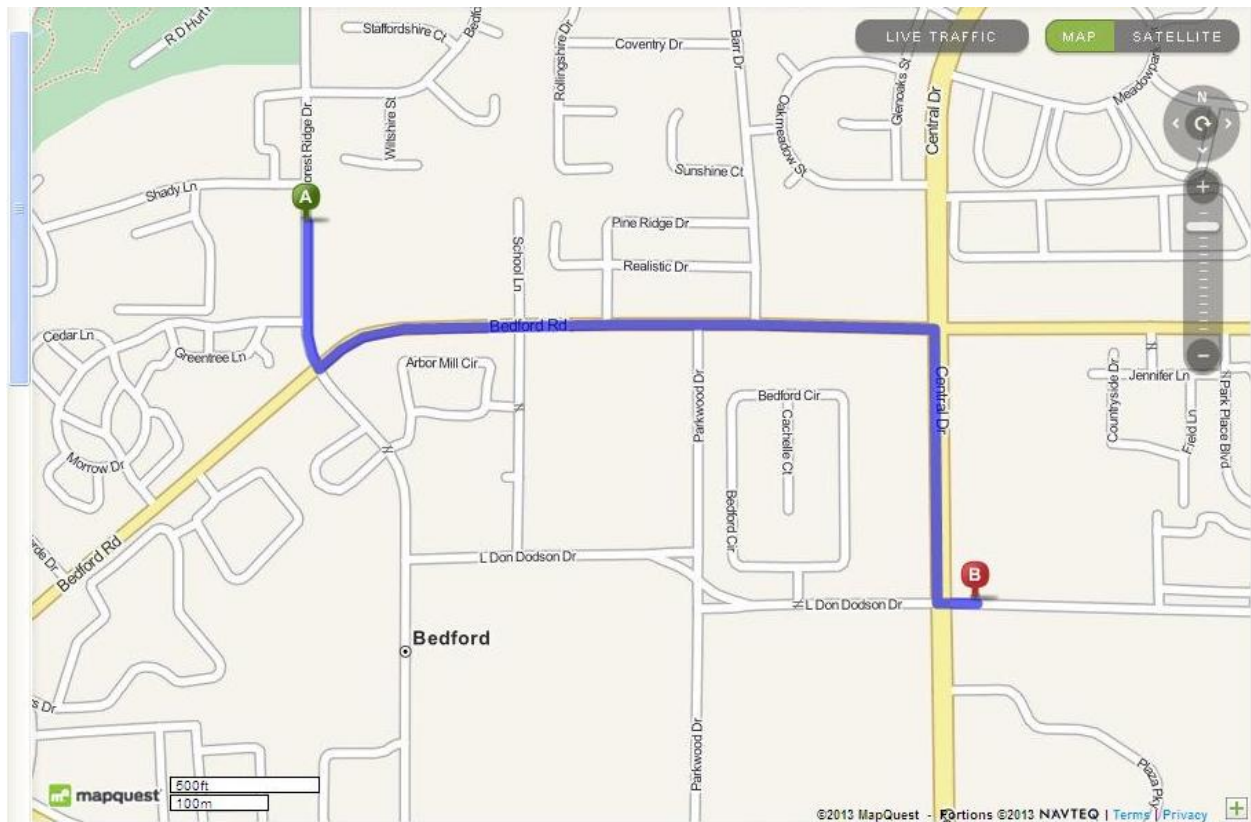


Directions to the Law Enforcement Center

2121 L. Don Dodson Drive, Bedford, TX 76021

817-952-2127

Total Distance 1.87 miles



1. Start out going south on Forest Ridge Dr toward Morrow Dr.
2. Take the 1st left onto Bedford Rd.
Bedford Rd is just past Morrow Dr
VALERO STORE 1239 is on the left
If you reach Forest Park Cir you've gone a little too far
3. Take the 3rd right onto Central Dr.
Central Dr is 0.1 miles past Barr Dr
Panda Express is on the corner
If you reach Villas of Bedford you've gone about 0.1 miles too far
4. Take the 1st left onto L Don Dodson Dr.
QUIK TRIP #863 is on the right
If you reach Plaza Pky you've gone a little too far
5. The Law Enforcement Center is located on the left across from the post office.