

# Unattended Children in the Library

## Board of Trustees

The Library Board welcomes and encourages children to use its facilities, materials, programs, and services. Parents and legal guardians are reminded, however, that libraries are open, public buildings and the well being and safety of young children left alone or unattended is a matter of concern.

It is not the intent of this policy to seek out and intervene on behalf of unattended children, but rather to have a reasoned response prepared to guide staff as necessary. The Library Board respects the privacy of all patrons and will intervene only when, in the judgment of our staff, a child is somehow threatened or endangered.

In order to provide for the general welfare of children, and for the benefit of all those using the Library, the following rules are in effect:

### Preschool children.

Children under the age of six must be accompanied and adequately supervised by an adult or responsible individual. The Library assumes no responsibility for unattended preschoolers.

The person in charge of the child must stay with the child, unless s/he is participating in a Discovery Time or other Library sponsored program. During Library sponsored programs, the adult or responsible individual must remain in the building and must return to the program area by the end of the event.

If a preschool child is found unattended, the staff will attempt to locate the individual responsible for the care of the child. If the responsible individual cannot be located in the building, or within 30 minutes at home, the proper authorities will be contacted to assume responsibility for the child.

### School-age children.

Children age six and older may use the Library unattended, subject to appropriate behavior. Parents and legal guardians should not use the Library as an alternative to daycare.

For safety's sake, parents should make sure that their children are sufficiently mature before allowing them to visit the Library by themselves. Parents should be advised that children who misbehave or disturb others might be asked to leave the Library, or the proper authorities may be contacted to assume responsibility for the child. Parents, even in their absence, are legally responsible for their child's behavior.

School-age children who depend on adults for transportation home must be picked up before the Library closes. The Library is not responsible for the care and supervision of unaccompanied children outside the building who await transportation or who are socializing. Adults responsible for unattended school-age children using the Library should be aware of the Library's hours and special holiday schedules and make arrangements to meet the children on time.

If a child is found unattended at closing, a senior staff member will attempt to call the child's home. The senior staff member and another employee will wait for fifteen minutes after closing for the child to be picked up. If attempts to contact the child's parents or responsible person fail, or if the transportation does not arrive within fifteen minutes of closing, the proper authorities will be called to assume responsibility for the child.

Parents are reminded that they are responsible for supervising their children's access to Library materials and services. While the staff members are always available to lead young people to interesting materials selected with children's interests and needs in mind, it will be assumed that children who visit the Library unattended are authorized to use the full range of materials and services available to our customers.

Approved 2/16/10