Unattended Child Policy

Introduction

The Calcasieu Parish Public Library asks parents to help us ensure the safety of our younger patrons. Because the library is a public place, children may be at risk. Library staff are often unaware of children's activities, movements, and circumstances, and because they are generally busy helping patrons, are not responsible for supervising children in the library. Parents should make sure their children are with responsible caregivers at all times. Also, because the library does not monitor children's library usage, parents are responsible for what books they read and what websites they visit.

Unattended Child Policy

Because library employees cannot be responsible for unattended children or children who demonstrate inappropriate behavior, the following guidelines are established:

1. All patrons, regardless of age, are expected to follow the Library's Code of Conduct as established by the Library Board of Trustees. It is posted prominently in each library facility, on the Library's website, and in handout form at each service desk.
2. Children age 12 and under must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver and remain near them, and in sight of them, at all times. Caregivers must be responsible and carry emergency contact information. The following exceptions may apply:
    a. At the discretion of the program facilitator, children may attend library-sponsored programs without the parent or caregiver in the room. However, the parent or caregiver must remain in the library building and join the child immediately after the program.
    b. Children ages 10 to 12 may be left unattended if they are participating in a library-sponsored program. If a parent or caregiver drops off a child to participate in a program, the child must have a phone number where the parent or caregiver can be reached for the duration of the program. Children must be picked up promptly at the end of the program.
3. If a child age 12 or under is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate their parent or caregiver in the library and inform them of the rules. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended again, the Sheriff's Office will be called for assistance.
4. If a child age 12 or under violates the Library's Code of Conduct, the child and the parent/caregiver will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the family may be asked to leave the library, in order to maintain the best library environment.
5. Children 13 and older may use the library without supervision if they have emergency contact information on them and are capable of leaving the library on their own. Parents are still responsible for the actions of their children. Children who act inappropriately may be asked to leave the library. Children in this age group who cannot leave the library without an adult should not be in the library alone. This is a particular concern in inclement weather and after dark.
6. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

7. Any child under the age of 18 who is left at the library after closing time will be turned over to the Sheriff's Office, in accordance with the Library's Code of Conduct. Please take into consideration that the library sometimes must close early due to unforeseen circumstances.
8. Children on tours, field trips, etc. must be accompanied by chaperones at all times, with a sufficient number of chaperones for any group. The recommended minimum is one chaperone per fifteen children.