

## CHILD SAFETY POLICY

The public library is a unique institution that welcomes patrons of all ages to use its facilities, services and resources. Children and their safety are of great concern to libraries. We encourage families and youth to use libraries and, while doing so, also affirm parents' responsibility for their children's safety and upbringing. Children, like all library patrons, are expected to behave appropriately. Parents and caregivers, not library staff, are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children in the library. An unattended child is a child of any age who is apparently unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver. Children who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves may not be left alone in the library, and must have adequate supervision from a caregiver. Parents and caregivers must be advised that libraries are public places. In libraries, 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 appropriate caregivers. The library cannot be responsible for any consequences of caregivers forfeiting their responsibilities. Library staff may refer to appropriate authorities those children who are left unattended in the library.

### **Unattended Children in the Library:**

- ◆ No matter the age, any disruptive behavior will provoke a call to the parents/guardians. If there is no response, then law enforcement authorities will be called.
- ◆ Unattended children are left at closing time—
  1. The staff will make all attempts to locate a parent. The parents will be informed of the library's policy and asked to pick up their child on time.
  2. If parents cannot be located within 15 minutes of closing, staff shall call the local police department to assume responsibility for the child.
  3. Under NO circumstances is staff to leave the child alone or take them in their car.