

## **UNATTENDED CHILDREN AND/OR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY**

**POLICY STATEMENT:** A parent who leaves children unattended in the library does so at his/her own risk. Library staff are not babysitters and will not supervise the child. The Library is a public building and as such cannot be considered a safe place to leave an unattended child. Parents are responsible for their children's behavior while in the library. Disruptive children who do not control their behavior within two warnings will have this policy enforced. Where "parent" is used in this policy it is to be understood that guardian is implied if appropriate.

### **CHILD LEFT UNATTENDED**

1. Young children left unattended are often frightened and crying and should be gently approached and verbally reassured by the staff.
2. If it is determined that a child is lost or left unattended, a staff member should bring the child to the Head of Circulation who will try to identify and locate the parents or responsible adults:
  - a. Walk around the Library with the child, looking for the parent.
  - b. Page the child's parents using parent's name if known, or child's name if known. If no name is available, describe the child's physical appearance.
  - c. When the parent is located, explain firmly the library policy on unattended children.
  - d. If the parent is not found in the building, the staff member should call the police.
  - e. Under no circumstances shall a staff member or library volunteer take the child out of the building.

### **DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**

#### **A. ATTENDED CHILDREN**

1. Children who are being disruptive will be asked by staff to behave.
2. If the disruptive behavior continues after a second warning, a staff member should inform the parents that their child is disturbing others.
3. If the parents refuse or are unable to control the child, the family will be asked to leave.

4. If the family does not leave in a timely manner the police will be called.

## **B. UNATTENDED CHILDREN**

If a child is unattended and is behaving in a disruptive manner:

1. The child will be asked to correct the behavior.
2. The staff member will give the child two warnings. If the child persists he/she will be asked for a parent name, phone number, and address.
3. After obtaining the child's and parents' names, attempt to locate the parents within the building. If located in the building, explain that the child is being disruptive and inform them of the library policy. If the parent refuses or is unable to control the child, the family will be asked to leave. If the family does not leave in a timely manner, the police will be called.
4. If the parent cannot be located within the building, the staff member will attempt to contact the parent through searching the database, phone book, etc., if the child has not provided the information. When the parent is contacted he/she will be told that the child is being disruptive, will be reminded of the library policy, and will be told he/she must pick up the child immediately. If he/she is unable to come immediately he/she will be told that the police will be called. Call the police if the parent has not arrived within half an hour.
5. If the parent cannot be contacted within half an hour, or if the library is closing, the police will be called.
6. If the parent cannot be located and the child leaves (e.g., to catch a ride ), the staff member will then write the parent describing the disruptive behavior incident and informing the parent of the library policy.