

Unattended Child Policy

The Calcasieu Parish Public Library asks parents to join us as partners in ensuring the safety of our younger customers. Because the public library is a public place, children may be at risk. And, because library staff is generally busy helping library customers, they are not responsible for supervising children who are using the library. They are often unaware of children's activities, movements, and circumstances. Parents, please make sure your children are with responsible caregivers at all times.

Also, get involved in your children's library use. Know what they are reading and viewing. And take responsibility for their Internet use. Unattended Child Policy – Adopted by the Board of Control, in regular meeting, March 18, 2004.

The CPPL is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for customers of all ages. Sharing this learning environment with other people requires that everyone follow the Library's "Code of Conduct", established by the Library Board of Control, posted prominently in each library facility, on the Library's website, and in handout form at each Loan desk. The CPPL wants children to use its facilities and services. Children in the library should always be accompanied by a parent/guardian or assigned caregiver.

When children are left alone they may become frightened or anxious. If they wander through the building, they may encounter hazards, such as stairs, doors, furniture, or electrical equipment. They may also become bored, restless, and may disturb others who are using the library. The safety of children left alone in a library building is a very serious concern. Responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver, not with library personnel. Because library employees cannot be responsible for children who are unattended, or who demonstrate inappropriate behavior, the following guidelines are established:

Children up to age 10 must have a parent/caregiver in the immediate vicinity of, and in visual contact with them. The assigned caregiver must be a responsible person and must carry emergency contact information. An exception would be children attending a library program without the parent or caregiver in the room, but the parent/caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and to immediately join the child at the end of the program. If a child in this age group is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library and inform him/her of the rules. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended again, the Sheriff's department will be called for assistance.

If a child in this age group 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. Children age 10 and older may be allowed to use the library on their own. However, parents are still responsible for the actions of their children. Children age 10 and older using inappropriate

behavior may be asked to leave the library. If a child in this age group is not able to leave the library without an adult, he/she should not be in the library alone. This is a particular concern in inclement weather and after dark.

It is recommended that children age 10 and older be accompanied during their library use, either by an older sibling, or by a parent/caregiver. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

CHILDREN LEFT UNATTENDED AT LIBRARY CLOSING TIME. As indicated in the Library's "Code of Conduct", children left after closing time will be turned over to law enforcement authorities. For this situation, an unattended child in Louisiana is defined as a person under the age of 18 years. Children on tours, field trips, etc. must be accompanied by chaperones at all times, with sufficient number of chaperones for any group. The recommended minimum is one chaperone per fifteen children.