



## **SAFE CHILDREN POLICY**

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

The Rockbridge Regional Library System (RRLS) welcomes children of all ages. Library employees are dedicated to providing materials, services and programs for the benefit of children in our community in a welcoming environment.

The safety of children in the library is a major concern to staff and the Library Board of Trustees. The RRLS facilities are public buildings, and as such, anyone can enter them. Library employees cannot monitor the whereabouts of any patrons, including children. Staff cannot assume responsibility for the care and safety of unattended children in the library. Parents and responsible caregivers are expected to provide supervision for children in the library. Children in the library are expected to follow the same rules and regulations as all other library patrons.

The Board of Trustees and library employees want children to have positive experiences in our facilities. Children left unattended may become frightened or anxious or may wander through the buildings, encountering hazards such as stairs, electrical equipment, doors, or furniture. An unattended child might be tempted to leave the building with a stranger. The child could get lost in a school group visiting the library. An unattended child could become ill. Emergency situations can occur in public buildings, requiring evacuation. Under any of these circumstances, an unattended child could panic and become lost.

It is for the safety of each child that this Safe Children Policy has been adopted. Parents and caregivers are expected abide by this policy.

For the purpose of this policy, a child is defined as a person under 18 years of age, a responsible caregiver is defined as the person who accompanies a child to the library and attends to the child while there. A responsible caregiver may be a parent, guardian, adult

relative, teacher, day care staff, baby sitter, or sibling of at least age 13 year of age. The responsible caregiver must have contact information for parents or guardians if needed.

**POLICY:**

Library employees do not act in loco parentis. Children ages 8 and older may be present in the library unaccompanied by a responsible caregiver provided the child follows the same rules and regulations as all other library patrons. The child must have information to be able to contact a parent or guardian if needed.

Children under the age of 8 must have a responsible caregiver within sight and conversation distance at all times. The caregiver is expected to supervise the child and ensure that the child's behavior is not disturbing to others.

Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children in the library, whether or not the parent is present.

When a child is unattended or under-attended/ignored and:

- the behavior of the child is disruptive or inappropriate (or)
- the child appears to be a danger to herself or himself or others (or)
- the child appears to be threatened by others (or)
- the child appears to be ill or upset (or)
- the child has not been met by a parent or caregiver at closing,

Library staff will attempt to contact the parent or guardian of the child. In the event that the parent or guardian cannot be located, staff or security will contact the local Police Department. In the event of an emergency, staff will call 911.

The Library Director and staff are authorized by the Board of Trustees to develop procedures to carry out this Safe Children Policy.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees, December 16, 2014