

## **Unattended and Disruptive Children Policy**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Seguin Public Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for customers of all ages. The library welcomes the use of its services and facilities by children. Library staff strives to create a warm, inviting, fun environment for children. The library offers many programs and services that encourage children to develop a love of books, reading and learning. However, the safety and well being of children at the library is of serious concern. It is the intention of this policy to enlist the cooperation of parents and other adults responsible for children to ensure that the Seguin Public Library provides a safe and pleasant experience for all who use it.

### **GUIDELINES**

- I. Unattended children are children of any age who are apparently unaccompanied by a parent, guardian, and/or responsible caregiver. Children who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves may not be left alone in the library and must have adequate supervision while in the library. Library staff are not responsible if children leave library property unattended.
- II. Any public place may be dangerous for a child who is left unattended for long hours or who is left stranded after closing hours. The safety of children left alone in the library is a serious concern of the library staff. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with library personnel.
- III. Library employees cannot be responsible for children who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior.
- IV. Children are expected to respect library property and adhere to the rules outlined in the "Library Rules of Conduct" policy.

## **STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

- I. Staff members are committed to:
  - a. Helping children find materials for school work and recreational reading.
  - b. Providing an environment that encourages study and exploration.
  - c. Planning short programs that inform and enrich.
- II. Staff members are also committed to the well-being and safety of children. However, the library is not designed or licensed to provide basic child care needs such as healthy snacks, physical exercise or emergency care if the child becomes ill or upset.
- III. Library staff will attempt to contact a parent, guardian, and/or caregiver in circumstances such as the following:
  - a. An unattended child is engaging in behavior that is disruptive to other library users, staff, or the normal operations of library business.
  - b. An unattended child is involved in a situation that is potentially harmful to the health or safety of the child and/or others.
  - c. An unattended child is left alone at the library at closing time.
- IV. The situations listed above will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If parents, guardians, and/or caregivers cannot be reached, or are unresponsive, the library will work with other city departments as needed, including police and/or truancy officers.

## **CUSTOMER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- I. When a child is disruptive and a caregiver is present, staff will request that the caregiver intervene with the child. After one warning, staff may request that the child and caregiver leave the library until the child's behavior is under control.
- II. Parents can help staff by explaining and expecting good behavior from their children.
- III. Parents should ensure that the child knows how to reach them and provide them with an emergency contact number.

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

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Jacki Gross, Library Director