

## MADISON PUBLIC LIBRARY POLICY MANUAL

### **SECTION: UNATTENDED CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY**

**Effective: July 2014, Updated June 2015**

Families and children are encouraged to use the Library. Responsibility for the behavior and well being of children using the Library rests with the parent (or guardian or caregiver assigned by the parent) and not with the Library's personnel.

If a child violates the Library Code of Conduct, the parent/caregiver and the child will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the family may be asked to leave the Library.

Child safety in the Library is a serious concern. Children left on their own often become frightened or anxious. They may become bored or restless and disturb other Library patrons. Children may be approached by adults or other minors and lured into unsafe situations.

#### **Children under age 6 in Library Programs**

During story times or other programs, a parent or responsible caregiver must remain in the building and immediately join the child at the end of the program. The parent should remain available at all times in case he/she is needed by the child during the program.

#### **Youth in the Library**

Children not yet attending high school are not permitted in the Library unless accompanied by a parent or adult caregiver.

Children between the ages 6 years and 9<sup>th</sup> grade may attend a Library program without a parent present in the Library under the following conditions:

- The parent or responsible adult brings the child to the Library no more than 10 minutes before the program start time.
- A student at the middle school brings a parent or guardian-signed permission slip to school allowing a Library staff member to meet the student at at the high school-side entrance to the library at the end of the school day (generally 2:45 – 3 pm) to attend the program.
- The parent or responsible adult is present to meet the child at the end of the program.

Parents are responsible for the behavior of their child(ren) to the age of 18 years even when the child is in the Library without them. A child using inappropriate behavior will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be asked to leave the Library. **If a child is not able to leave the Library without an adult, he/she should not be in the Library without an adult.** This is of particular concern in inclement weather and after dark. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

#### **Unattended Children at the Library at Closing Time**

When attending a program without an adult, children should have definite arrangements to be picked up at the end of the program. A child left unattended at closing time will be asked for telephone numbers of people who can pick him/her up at the Library immediately. If a parent or caregiver does not arrive at the Library within 10 minutes, the police will be asked to pick up the child.

If necessary, two staff members will remain with a child left unattended at closing time. Staff members will use their judgement when dealing with unattended youth at closing time. Staff should complete an Incident Report noting date, name(s), length of wait and whether police were notified. Staff do not drive children home.

#### **Notification of Parents When Police Have Been Called**

When the police have been called to pick up a child, staff will leave a note on the door notifying the parent or caregiver.