

CHILD SAFETY

PURPOSE

It is the policy of the Regional Library to provide a safe and appropriate environment for library customers of all ages. The Regional Library operates community libraries with staff trained to provide public library services, but is not equipped, nor is it the Regional Library's role, to provide long or short-term daycare for children of any age. The Regional Library's staff is not responsible for supervising or tending to the needs of individual users or groups of users.

POLICIES

Parents and caregivers should not leave any minor child unattended for unreasonable periods of time at any community library. Parents are responsible for the behavior of their minor child in any community library, whether or not the parent is present.

Children under the age of six (6) years old should be under the direct supervision of their parent or designated caregiver at all times. If the child is attending a library program, the parent or caregiver should not leave the community library.

Minor children are the responsibility of their parent or caregiver, whether or not the child is under their direct supervision. Direct supervision of minor children six (6) years or older is not necessary as long as the child's conduct is not disruptive.

Children under the age of twelve (12) should not be substituted for a parent or caregiver to supervise younger children. If a young person over the age of twelve (12) is acting as the caregiver, the parent or legal guardian is ultimately

responsibility for the safety and behavior of all their minor children.

Parents and legal guardians should be aware of community libraries' opening and closing times. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for making arrangements to meet and transport their minor children who have been left unattended at a community library. If a child is unattended in a community library at closing time, the child or the library staff will call the parent. If the parent cannot be reached by telephone or the parent or guardian has not picked up the child within ten (10) minutes after the closing time, local law enforcement will be called. Under no circumstances will minor children be left alone until the parent, legal guardian, or law enforcement arrive to pick up the child.

Under no circumstances will library staff transport or escort a child home or to any other destination or leave a community library with them.

Minor children are expected to behave according to the established Rules of Conduct. Disruptive or inappropriate behavior will result in the individual(s) being asked to leave and/or being denied access to a community library for a period of time. Parents and/or law enforcement will be notified as deemed necessary by library staff. The judgment of the library staff prevails when requesting the removal of a minor child from the community library in event of behavioral difficulties.

Internet resources are available at all community libraries. Parents and legal guardians should become familiar with the Regional Library's current Internet Policy, Guidelines for Internet Customers, and publications such as Child Safety on the Information Highway and The Internet: A Parents' Guide. The Internet may contain inaccurate, outdated, incomplete, controversial, or offensive information. All use of computer resources is at the risk of the user. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for monitoring and restricting their children's use of this resource.

Bodily injury, mistreatment, or abandonment of a minor child that places the child at risk of bodily harm will be reported to local law enforcement.

Adopted: July 25, 2000