

# Unattended Children

Revised & Approved 11-19-18

Children and young people are expected to adhere to the same standards of patron conduct expected of adults. Responsibility for the behavior and well-being of children using the library rests with the parents, guardians, or assigned caregivers, and not with the library's staff.

The library is not responsible for unattended children and is mandated by statute to report suspected neglect or abuse. (KRS 620.030)

## Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

\***Parents** will be used throughout this policy to mean parents, guardians, or caregivers;

\*A **child** is a patron who is under the age of 18;

\*An **unattended child** is when the caregiver is unable to communicate with the child verbally at a reasonable volume;

\*A **disruptive child** is one whose actions disturb others or damage items belonging to the library or to others; (also see Library Behavior Policy)

\*A **caregiver** must be over 13 years of age (a **child** might also be a **caregiver** to other children who are under the age of 13).

## Neglect or Abuse

Children under the age of ten (10) years cannot be left unattended in any area of the library without a parent physically present in the building. If an unattended child under the age of ten (10) years is found within the library and the child's parents cannot readily be located, staff will call the proper authorities, including but not limited to the Hazard City Police, to report an abandoned child.

## Program Attendance

During library programs, parents who do not attend programs with a child under the age of ten (10) must remain in the vicinity of the program at a distance to allow the parent to communicate with the child verbally at a reasonable volume.

## Disruptive behavior

The Library will report to parents and/or law enforcement any instance where an unattended child is disruptive. Law enforcement, including but not limited to the Hazard City Police, may be asked to remove unattended disruptive children whose parents cannot be found.

## Children left after closing

When a child (under 18 years of age) is unattended at the time the Library closes, staff will make a reasonable attempt to contact the parents. If a parent is contacted but does not arrive to pick up the child within thirty (30) minutes after

contact has been made, library staff will contact proper authorities, including but not limited to the Hazard City Police. If library staff are unable to contact parents, law enforcement will be called to take custody of the child. Two (2) library staff members will remain with the child after closing until the parent or law enforcement takes custody.

Under no circumstances will staff transport children in a vehicle or accompany them home.

### **Notification for Parents**

When law enforcement has obtained custody of an unattended child at closing time, staff will make a reasonable attempt to contact the parents and will leave a notice on the library entrance door to notify the parent which law enforcement has taken custody of the child.

### **Incident Reports**

Incident reports will be completed by staff and submitted immediately to their supervisor whenever parents or law enforcement personnel are contacted pursuant to this policy. This includes any incident involving the neglect of a child.

Repeated incidents involving a particular child may result in loss of library privileges for both child and/or parent.