Unattended Child Policy

This policy is designed to provide guidelines for staff in dealing with children left at the library or with children who are disruptive. Children who are too young to take care of themselves or who will not follow library rules should not be allowed to stay in the library by themselves. Children under age five should not be allowed to stay in the library by themselves. Children under age five should not be left unattended at the library. Our staff will not take responsibility for the safety of children left at the library nor will they provide transportation for children left at the library at closing.

A. Unattended Child Policy
   1. Children under the age of 9 must be attended by a parent or a responsible child care provider while at the Grimes Public Library. Children under the age of 5 must be attended at all times. It is not the library's intention to seek out unattended children but rather to have a reasoned response prepared as problems present themselves.
   2. The staff should make an effort to locate the parent and contact them by phone. When the responsible adult is located, they should be informed of this policy and asked to either come to stay with them at the library or pick the child up immediately. If the parent can't or won't come immediately, they will be told the child may stay until they arrive this time but that the police will be called upon to pick the child at the next occurrence.
   3. If the parents have not been located within an hour or if the library is closing, the staff shall call the Polk County Sheriff's Department at 911. The Polk County Sheriff's Department will assume responsibility for the child.
   4. Under no circumstances shall a staff member take the child out of the building.

B. Children Left Unattended at Closing
   1. If the parent is not in the building at closing, a staff member should attempt to locate the parent through searching the library's records or the phone book. If it is the first time the child is left unattended at closing, the parent should be informed of the library's policy and asked that the child be picked up on time in the future.
   2. If the parents have not been located within 15 minutes after closing, the circulation desk staff shall call the Polk County Sheriff's Department who will assume responsibility for the child.
   3. Under no circumstances shall library staff leave a child alone outside that is waiting for a parent after closing or take them in their car.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

A. Disruptive Attended Children
   1. Children who are misbehaving should be asked by the staff to correct their behavior.
   2. If the child continues to be disruptive, a staff member should inform the parents that their child is disturbing others.
   3. If the parents refuse or are unable to correct the behavior of the child, the family will be asked to leave for the day.

B. Disruptive Unattended Children
   1. If a child is unattended and is misbehaving or requiring constant attention, the staff member will ask the child to correct the behavior.
   2. If the child persists, the staff member would attempt to contact the parent. When the parent is contacted, the parent will be told that the child is being disruptive, will be reminded of the library's policy, and will be told that he or she must pick the child up immediately. If he or she is unable to come immediately, he or she will be told that the child may stay this time, but that the Polk County Sheriff's Department will be called next time.
   3. If the parent cannot be contacted or if the library is closing, the Polk County Sheriff's Department will be called upon to take responsibility for the child unless the child is being picked up. The staff will then write the parent, describing the incident and informing him or her of the library policy.
   4. If the child has come to the library unattended the child can leave unattended unless specified otherwise.

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