

## **SAFE CHILD POLICY**

(Adopted by the Board: July 2002)

Children age eight and under must be directly supervised by a parent, caregiver or sibling, twelve years of age or older, during their entire stay in the library, except during Children's Programs.

### **Philosophy Behind Our Safe Child Policy**

We are glad your children are here! We want the Plainfield-Guilford Township Public Library to be a welcoming, educational and safe place for your child.

Our library staff is here to serve you and has many duties to perform in order to help all of our patrons in the best way possible. As a result the staff cannot monitor the whereabouts or behavior of our smallest patrons - your children. Staff cannot assume the responsibility of your child's care when the child is in the library.

No public place, including the library, can guarantee the safety of children. A child could be lured away by a stranger or become ill. A child could wander outside and become lost or injured. An emergency could dictate that we evacuate the building. We are primarily concerned with your child's safety, and we feel this policy better assures his or her well-being.

Therefore, the behavior and welfare of children in the library are the responsibility of the parent or guardian accompanying the child to the library. For the safety and protection of young library users, the Plainfield-Guilford Township Public Library has adopted the following policy concerning children left unattended in the library.

- A. Unattended children eight and under:
  - 1. Parents/caregivers may not leave children eight and under unattended in the library at any time.
  - 2. The library in no way assumes responsibility for any child eight or under left unattended in the building.
  - 3. Parents/caregivers are responsible for their children's behavior while in the library and for ensuring that their children obey library rules and regulations.
  - 4. Parents/caregivers must remain in the library during library-sponsored programs if their children are eight and under, and must pick up the children upon conclusion of the program

5. If a child in this age group is found unattended when the library is open, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library and inform him/her of the Safe Child Policy. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, the child will be placed in the care of law enforcement.
6. Under no circumstances will a staff member give the child a ride home, take the child outside the building, or offer the child a seat in his/her vehicle.
7. Once the child has been placed in the care of law enforcement personnel, the staff will leave notes to this effect at the front desk and on the front door of the library.
8. Parents who continue to disregard library policy regarding this matter may be reported to the appropriate social services agency and/or may lose all library privileges.

B. Unattended children ages nine and over:

1. Children ages nine and over are responsible for obeying library rules and regulations.
2. The library in no way assumes responsibility for any child nine or older left unattended in the building
3. Parents/caregivers of children between the ages of nine and twelve must have a responsible plan for picking up their children by closing time. Children must be made aware of the specific arrangements that have been made.
4. The procedure for dealing with unattended children eight or under (outlined above) may also be applied to:
  - a. a child that has not been picked up within 15 minutes of closing
  - b. a child that has become ill or frightened
  - c. a child that is vulnerable because of circumstances such as weather conditions, inadequate meal arrangements or long hours out of contact with parent/caregiver
  - d. a child that has become disruptive and has not responded to verbal warnings issued by library staff.
5. Parents who continue to disregard library policy regarding this matter may be reported to the appropriate social services agency and/or may lose all library privileges.

The library staff respects the privacy of all library patrons and will intervene only when, in the opinion of the library staff, the safety and well-being of a child is threatened.