

APPLICABILITY: This policy applies to all children using the Library and their parents, legal guardians, and/or designated caregivers.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Safe Child Policy is to ensure the safety of children using the Library.

DEFINITIONS

Child: An individual who is below the age of majority (18 years old) and unemancipated.

Neglected child: Per NC.G.S § 7B-101, a child who does not receive “proper care, supervision, or discipline” from his or her parent/guardian.

Designated caregiver: Any person age 18 and older designated by the parent or legal guardian as responsible adult during the child’s entire visit to the Library.

Inappropriate: Actions not suitable or proper in the circumstances.

POLICY:

1. Responsibility

- a. The responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children lies with the parent, legal guardian, or designated caregiver at all times. This includes times when the parent, legal guardian, or designated caregiver is not present within a Library building or on Library grounds.
- b. Parents, legal guardians, and/or designated caregivers are responsible for any actions including, but not limited to, monetary responsibility for property damage or loss caused by their children.

2. Supervision

- a. Children aged 10 and under are to be supervised and must remain in the physical presence of the parent, legal guardian, or designated caregiver during the child’s entire visit to the Library. This includes any time during which the child participates in a program. Unsupervised children are considered unattended children.

3. Behavior

- a. The Library’s [Courteous Conduct Policy](#) applies to all customers regardless of age.
- b. Library staff will determine whether a child’s behavior is inappropriate and will respond to such situations in the manner deemed appropriate based on the

Library's Courteous Conduct Policy.

4. Unattended children

- a. If a parent, legal guardian, or designated caregiver cannot be located when needed, staff will notify Durham County Security to ensure the safety of the child. Durham Police Department may also be notified.
- b. If a child aged 15 or under is left unattended at closing, security and/or staff will notify Durham Police.
- c. Staff members will remain outside of the building with an unattended child until the appropriate authorities arrive. Staff are not permitted to remain (in the building) after operating hours with an unattended child, nor may they transport a child from the premises. All actions taken regarding unattended children after closing will follow established safety and notification procedures.

5. Reporting suspected abuse or neglect

- a. Per North Carolina law, all library employees are required to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a juvenile to the Durham County Department of Social Services at (919) 560-8424, or, in an emergency contact 911 (NCGS § 7B-301).

RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all Library staff to fully understand this policy and to ensure fair and equitable application. It is the responsibility of the Deputy Director, with the advice of the Board of Trustees, to interpret, monitor and recommend updates to the policy. The Library Director is the final authority regarding enforcing this policy.

ENFORCEMENT

Library employees are required by law to contact law enforcement based on this statute:

REFERENCE:

[N.C.G.S. § 7B-301: Duty to report abuse, neglect, dependency, or death due to maltreatment.](#)