

Safety of Children in the Library Policy

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Northlake Public Library District welcomes the use of the Library facilities and services by children. However, Library staff is not licensed or able to provide for childcare needs in lieu of parental responsibility. Parents and caregivers should be aware that the Library is a public building open to all, and that staff are not able to monitor the safety or whereabouts of each child visiting the Library.

General Guidelines

Parents or caregivers are responsible for the behavior of their children within the Library, including being respectful of staff, other patrons and the Library's collection. Children under the age of nine (9) must be within the eyesight of a parent or responsible person of at least twelve (12) years of age at all times while in the Library. Children age nine (9) and up are left on their own in the building at the parent's discretion. It is the responsibility of the parent or responsible person to know the open hours of the Library and to pick up his/her child before the Library closes.

Library Programs

No child under the age of three (3) may be left in any program or special event alone. The parent or responsible person should remain in the building for any child under the age of nine (9) so that he/she is available if the child must leave a program for any reason. The parent or responsible person is expected to join the child promptly at the end of any library program.

Unattended Children

If any child under age nine (9) is left unattended, the child will remain at the main desk on the floor of the Library where he/she was found. The responsible person will be paged over the Library public address system. If the responsible person is not located, Library staff will attempt to telephone the child's parents. If staff is unable to reach the parent, the Police will be called to assume responsibility for the child. Two staff members should remain with the child until a parent or the police arrive. Library staff under no circumstances will transport the child or take the child away from the building.

In the event of a violation of the Library policy regarding unattended children, staff will fill out an Incident Report and place it on file with the Library Director.

A child of any age habitually left unattended, or left unattended for an extended period, may be deemed to be at risk. In such situations, Library staff may contact local law enforcement or the Department of Children and Family Services to ensure the safety and well-being of a child.

Library Closing

If any child under the age of fourteen (14) does not have a responsible adult present when the Library closes, two Library staff members will stay with the child in the foyer of the Library. In the event that the child is still at the library 15 minutes after the library closes to the public, the police will be called to pick up the young person. Attempts will be made during that 15 minutes to reach the parents/guardians. An incident report must be written for any situation of an unattended child. A copy of the incident report must be provided to the Library Director.