



# Child Safety

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The Rowan County Public Library (“the Library”) strives to be a safe location for people of all ages, but the safety of children is of paramount importance. To that end, the Library has adopted policies regarding unacceptable conduct and related issues to ensure that the library environment is a safe and welcoming one.

While providing a safe environment is important, the care of children is ultimately the responsibility of the caregiver(s).

## DEFINITIONS

Applications and interpretations of this policy shall use the following definitions:

- A “child” is considered to be a patron who is 17 years of age or younger; and
- a child is considered to be “unattended” when a caregiver is unable to communicate effectively with the child (including at a reasonable volume, when communication is verbal); and
- a “disruptive” child is considered to be one whose actions disturb others or damage items and/or property belonging to the Library or to others; and
- a “caregiver” must be over 13 years of age (meaning a “child” might also be a “caregiver” to other children who are under the age of 13).

## NEGLECT OR ABUSE

The Library is not responsible for unattended children and is mandated by statute to report suspected neglect or abuse. (KRS 620.030) In no instance may a child under the age of 13 be left without a caregiver physically present in the building.

Neglect will be reported to law enforcement when:

- Children aged five (5) or younger are left unattended for any length of time; or
- Children aged six (6) through nine (9) are left unattended for more than 30 minutes; or



# Child Safety

Last modified APRIL 18 2019

- Children aged 10 through 12 are left unattended for two (2) hours or longer.

Any case of suspected abuse must be promptly reported to the Executive Director.

## **DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**

The Library will report to law enforcement any instance where an unattended child is disruptive and does not respond to the correction of staff. Law enforcement may be asked to remove unattended children whose caregivers cannot be located or contacted.

## **CHILDREN LEFT AFTER CLOSING**

When a child is unattended at the closure of library premises and/or facilities, employees will make reasonable attempts to contact a caregiver. If staff are unable to contact a caregiver, law enforcement will be called to take custody of the child. Staff will remain with the child until law enforcement takes custody.

Library privileges may be curtailed when a child is repeatedly left unattended at the conclusion of library operational hours.

## **REPORTS**

Incident reports will be completed for any incident involving the neglect or abuse of a child and for any disruptive behavior in which law enforcement is notified. Repeated incidents involving a particular child may result in loss of library privileges for both the child and their caregiver(s).

## **CONSEQUENCES**

Any patron in violation of this policy will be given a copy of the policy and will be asked to follow the rules outlined herein. If the patron continues to violate the rules, they will be asked to leave library premises and/or facilities for a specified period of time, as follows.

- After an initial warning has been issued, a second offense will result in 24-hour ban from library premises and/or facilities.
- Once the patron returns to the library, if a third incident occurs, they will be banned from the library for one (1) week.
- A fourth occurrence will result in the patron being banned for one (1) month.
- Subsequent incidents will result in a cumulative ban of one (1) additional month per incident.

## CHILDREN'S AREA

The children's area of the library is dedicated to resources and services for children. Persons aged eighteen (18) or older who are unaccompanied by children are to visit the children's area only for the retrieval of study materials, and must check out and arrange for the retrieval and/or use of Library materials elsewhere on the premises.

### Regulations

- Caregivers are required to accompany children to the children's area to participate actively in reading, programs, and the selection and use of library materials by a child for whom they are responsible.
- Persons who are unaccompanied by children may select items in the children's area, but may not loiter there.
- Persons who are unaccompanied by children may not use the computers or restroom facilities in the children's area.
- Persons who are unaccompanied by children may be asked to leave the children's area at the discretion of Library staff.
- These regulations likewise apply to library programming intended for children.



# Child Safety

Last modified APRIL 18 2019

## YOUNG ADULT/TEEN AREA

The young adult/teen area is dedicated to resources and services for patrons ages 13 through 18 (“teens”). The purpose of this library area is to assemble select information and cultural resources while offering a supportive and positive space where teens can study, socialize, and access grade-level materials.

### Regulations

- All patrons, regardless of age, are welcome to select books and materials from the young adult/teen collection.
- All seating, technology, and activities provided in the young adult/teen area are limited to use by teens only.
- Any patron may be asked to leave the young adult/teen area at the discretion of Library staff.
- These regulations likewise apply to library programming intended for teens.