



## **Unattended Child Policy**

### **Purpose**

The Library is a public building and is open to all residents of Cleveland County and visitors to each branch location. Children left on their own are vulnerable. The purpose of the Unattended Child Policy is to ensure the safety of children using the library.

### **Definition**

Neglected child: A child who does not receive proper care, supervision or discipline from his or her parent/guardian.

### **Policy**

The Cleveland County Library System welcomes children of all ages to use materials and services. The library staff nurtures children to develop a love of reading and learning, but is not responsible for their care, their supervision or for accidents or other incidents that happen to them or that result from their actions.

### **Responsibility**

At all times the responsibility for the care, safety and behavior of children lies with the parent, guardian, or designated caregiver. This includes times when the parent, guardian or designated caregiver is not present within the library building or on library grounds. Library staff and/or security will determine whether a child's behavior is inappropriate and will respond to such situations in the manner deemed appropriate based on the Cleveland County Library System's Rules of Use

Parents, 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 under the age of 18.

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

### **Supervision**

Children aged 12 and under are to be supervised and must remain in the physical presence of the parent or guardian or caregiver age 18 or over during the child's entire visit to the library.

If a parent, guardian, or designated caregiver, cannot be located when needed, or if staff suspects neglect or abuse, staff will contact the City of Shelby police department.

If a child age 15 or under is left unattended at closing, staff will notify appropriate authorities.

Children must leave the library at closing time. Children left to wait outside the building for a ride after the library has closed are placed in a vulnerable position. Under no circumstances will a staff member give a child a ride home.

If a child is asked to leave the library at closing time, and is observed to be unaccompanied by a caregiver, staff will ask the child if he/she is able to leave the building without a caregiver, and if not, staff will attempt to contact a parent, guardian, and/or responsible caregiver who can pick up the child.

If a parent, guardian, and/or responsible caregiver is not available to pick up the child at closing time, library staff will contact the police to assist the child.

### **Applicability**

This policy applies to all children using the library, their parents/guardians, and/or designated caregivers at all library branches and for outreach programs.

### **Contact List**

If staff are aware that a child is not going to be picked up before the library closes, please use the list below in order of who to contact:

Parent or Guardian

City of Shelby Police (704) 484-6845

Department of Social Services (704)-484-4822