

SEC - K

FORSYTH COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SAFE CHILDREN POLICY

Philosophy Statement

The Forsyth County Public Library welcomes children of all ages. It is a doorway through which life-long learning takes place. The public library is, however, just that, a public building. As such, *anyone* may come into it.

Library staff have many duties to perform in order to serve all citizens of Forsyth County. They cannot always monitor the behavior or whereabouts of patrons, and this includes children. Staff cannot take over parental responsibilities for children who come into the Library.

It is for the safety of each child that the Forsyth County Public Library has adopted this Safe Children Policy. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to ensure a pleasant and safe experience for the children they bring or send to the Library by heeding this policy.

Policy

Children are welcomed to the Library to benefit from materials, services, and programs. Children's caregivers are responsible for their children's behavior and safety while on library premises. For the purpose of this policy, we define **caregiver** as the responsible person who accompanies the child to the Library. Caregivers could be parents, guardians, grandparents, babysitters, siblings, etc.

Children 7 years of age and younger must remain in the same room and within eyesight of the caregiver at all times during their stay in the Library. For unattended children of this age, Library staff will attempt to locate the caregiver within the Library. If the caregiver cannot be located, the police will be called and the abandoned child will be placed in police custody. Children attending Library programs supervised by Library staff do not have to remain with caregivers during the programs, but caregivers must remain in the Library.

Children 8 years of age and older may remain in the Library without a caregiver present if they are observed by Library staff to be using the Library appropriately.

Appropriate library use includes, but is not limited to:

- looking at or reading books or magazines
- quietly using any available audio-visual materials or equipment
- working on schoolwork
- participating in library programs or activities

SEC – K.1

UNATTENDED YOUNG PEOPLE LEFT AFTER HOURS POLICY

All children are subject to the "Rules for Use of the Forsyth County Public Library" which are posted throughout the Library. The "Unattended Young People Left After Hours" Policy will be enforced as necessary.

The Forsyth County Public Library is concerned about the safety of our juvenile customers. The many dangers present when children are left unattended have resulted in the following policy:

1. Unaccompanied young people (under age 16) must be picked up by library closing time.
2. Children under 8 years old must be accompanied by a caregiver at all times.
3. Prior to closing, the library staff will announce to all unattended young people that they must arrange for a ride, and to be picked up prior to closing
4. After closing, the library staff will record the name, parent's or guardian's name, address, and phone number of any child left unattended. They will make sure a reasonable effort has been made to contact the parent, guardian, or other source of transportation.
5. If the child is picked up by someone other than the parent, such as a relative or adult friend the child has called, that person must show sign for the child and verify ID.
6. If no one has arrived within a reasonable amount of time after closing (45 minutes), the police or sheriff will be notified and asked to come and take responsibility for the child.
7. The police will be called immediately upon closing the third time the child is left after hours

The Library does not assume responsibility or care of young people after hours, or at any other time.

This policy was adopted November 17, 1993, by the Forsyth County Public Library Board of Trustees.

SEC – K.2

UNATTENDED YOUNG PEOPLE LEFT AFTER HOURS:

PROCEDURE

1. Announce to all unattended young people that they should arrange for a ride prior to closing. Remember to allow sufficient time for them to make arrangements. (At Central, Security should announce 30 and 15 minutes prior to closing.)
2. Wait 45 minutes after closing with the young person. While waiting, you should continue to call parent or other possible rides. If transportation has not arrived by five minutes after closing, fill out the "Unattended Young People Left After Hours: Information Form."
3. At forty-five minutes past closing, call your local law enforcement official. **Remember to call back to cancel if the ride shows up before law enforcement officials.**
4. Wait with the young person until the law enforcement official arrives. The law enforcement official will take the child to the police or sheriff's department to notify the parent or guardian. After noting the officer's name on the form, you may go home
5. See that parents who show up get a copy of the "Unattended Young People Left After Hours Policy."
6. After 3 offenses for the same family, call law enforcement officials immediately at closing time, and follow the remainder of items 4-5 above. A written report should be submitted to your Division Head, to determine if other action should be taken.

Note: This policy should be applied to anyone under the age of 16.

SEC – K.3

UNATTENDED YOUNG PEOPLE

INFORMATION FORM

_____ under 8 years old
_____ left after hours
_____ 8 and older - disruptive behavior

Date _____

Library
Location _____

Staff member
filling out form _____

Name of Child _____ Age _____

Name of Parent or Guardian _____

Address _____

_____ Phone # _____

NOTES:

SEC – K.4

**SIGN TO SUPPORT "UNATTENDED YOUNG PEOPLE
LEFT AFTER HOURS POLICY"**

Signs stating the following will be made for display at all library locations:

**Children Under 8 Years Old
Must be Accompanied by a Responsible Caregiver**

**Unaccompanied Young People (8-15 Years Old)
Must Be Picked Up By Library Closing Time or
law enforcement may be notified and
further action may be taken.**

SEC – K.5

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Child abuse is a situation where a person responsible for a child wilfully causes or permits the child to suffer, or inflicts thereon, unjustifiable physical pain or mental suffering, or having the care or custody of any child, willfully causes or permits the person or health of the child to be placed in a situation such that his or her person or health is endangered.

Every person in North Carolina who has cause to suspect that a child is abused or neglected must report the case to the Department of Social Services in the county where the child resides or is found. The report may be made anonymously, and the person who makes the report is immune from any civil or criminal liability, providing the reporter was acting in good faith. (N.C.G.S. 7A-543, 7A-550).

STAFF PROCEDURE

1. If the child's life is in danger, or the abuse is severe, call the police at 911.
2. If the child is in less immediate danger or has left the library, try to obtain the name and address of the child if possible. Patron records may be used for this purpose. Consult with Library Administration at this point.
3. Report the name and address and a description of the incident or situation to the Department of Social Services (703-3500).