

APPENDIX XIV: Safe Child Policy

Safe Child Policy

The Cumberland County Public Library welcomes children of all ages to use library materials and services. The library staff encourages children to develop a love of reading and learning. We want each child to have a positive experience each time he or she visits the library. The library is, however, a public building that anyone can enter and leave without being observed by library staff. The library staff cannot monitor the safety, behavior or whereabouts of people using the library. The library does not serve in the capacity of providing daycare for unattended children. Children left unattended in the library might become frightened or anxious. **It is ultimately the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to ensure the safety of their children both within the library building and on library grounds.**

Hours Open Procedure

- 1) Children 8 years old and younger must be in the presence of a parent or responsible caregiver at all times unless they are attending a library sponsored program, in which case the parent or caregiver must remain in the library building for the duration of the library program. The caregiver is expected to supervise the child and ensure that the child's behavior is not disturbing to other library patrons.
- 2) Children 9 – 10 years old must have a parent or responsible caregiver present in the library during their entire library visit. The parent or caregiver must be readily accessible to library staff if staff requires assistance with the child. The parent or caregiver should clearly inform the child of his or her location in the library building before leaving the child alone in any part of the building.
- 3) Children 11 years old and older may be present in the library unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver. The child should have emergency contact information for his or her parent or caregiver at all times. Unaccompanied children are required to abide by Cumberland County Public Library's Behavior Policy, and may be asked to leave the library if their behavior is not acceptable after reasonable warning by library staff.
- 4) Persons of any age with mental, physical or emotional disabilities which affect decision-making skills or render supervision necessary, must be accompanied by a parent or responsible caregiver at all times.

Unattended Children at Closing Time

- 1) Children ages 15 and under who require transportation should be picked up by their parent or caregiver no later than ten minutes prior to closing.
- 2) If no parent or caregiver is present at closing time, library staff will wait with the child for fifteen minutes after closing time. Reasonable attempts will be made to contact the child's parent or caregiver.
- 3) If no parent or caregiver is located within 15 minutes, the Sheriff's department will be contacted to take custody of the child. Library staff will never provide transportation for any child left after closing.

Disruptive Behavior

Cumberland County Public Library's Behavior Policy applies to all patrons, regardless of age.