



# GREENSBORO PUBLIC LIBRARY PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING UNATTENDED OR DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY

## I. UNATTENDED CHILDREN

### A. AGE TEN AND UNDER (formerly 8-10)

Children age ten and under may not be left unattended in the library. They must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible person (age 15 or older) at all times. Parents and/or responsible persons are accountable for their children's behavior and safety while in the library.

Children shall be considered "attended" as long as they are within sight of the parent or other responsible person. An exception would be children attending a story time or other library program without a parent/responsible person in the room. However, the parent/responsible person must remain within the immediate area and join the child at the end of the program.

1. Children left unattended are often frightened and crying and should be comforted by the staff. If it becomes apparent that a child age ten (10) and under is lost or has been left unattended, a staff member will try to identify and locate the parent or other person responsible for the child by walking through the library with the child or by paging the responsible person. Meetings in progress should also be checked.
2. When the parent/responsible person is located, the staff member will explain the library's policy on unattended children, stressing concern for the child's safety. The parent/responsible person will be given a copy of the policy.
3. If the person responsible is not located in the library, every effort should be made to locate the child's parent/responsible person by telephone. A staff member will stay with the child in a public area while this is being done. If a parent/responsible person is reached, staff should insist that the child be picked up immediately, explaining the library's policy. (Refer to #2)
4. If the child's parent/responsible person has not been located within 30 minutes, or sooner if the library is closing, the staff member in charge will call the Greensboro Police (or designated agency) who will then assume responsibility for the child. The staff member in charge and one other staff member will stay with the child until the proper authorities arrive. An Incident Report will be filed.
5. Under no circumstances will staff take the child out of the library. Library staff will not take the child home or sit with the child in a car.

## **B. CLOSING TIME PROCEDURES FOR UNATTENDED CHILDREN 11-15 (formerly 14 and under)**

If a staff member observes an unattended child thirty minutes prior to closing, that staff member will ask the child what his/her provisions are for getting home. If the child seems unsure, the staff member in charge of the library will call the parent/responsible person.

If closing time arrives and the child is still in the library:

1. An attempt will be made to call the parent/responsible person. If a parent/responsible person is contacted, insist that the child be picked up immediately.
2. If a parent/responsible person cannot be reached, the police department or other designated agency will be contacted, with the request that someone pickup the child as abandoned. An Incident Report will be filed.
3. The staff person in charge and one other staff member will remain in the building with the child until a parent, responsible person, or police officer arrives.
4. A copy of the library policy on unattended children will be handed to the child's parent/responsible person or to the child.
5. Under no circumstances shall a staff member take a child out of the building.

## **C. CLOSING TIME PROCEDURES FOR UNATTENDED YOUTH 16 YEARS OLD AND OVER: (Formerly 15)**

At the discretion of the staff member in charge, if an unattended youth 16 years old and older is still in the library at closing time:

1. An attempt will be made to contact the parent/responsible person by the staff member in charge of the library. If a parent/responsible person is contacted, insist that the youth be picked up immediately.
2. If a parent/responsible person cannot be contacted, the youth should be given the opportunity of waiting outside the library or, if the staff person in charge feels it is warranted, the staff person may call the police or designated agency with the request that someone pick up the youth as abandoned. An Incident Report will be filed.

For any youth left at the library after closing, the parent's/responsible person's name and address should be obtained and sent to the Director who will send a letter to the parent/responsible person stressing that the library and its employees cannot be responsible for youths not picked up at the library at closing.

## **II. DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN**

### **A. CHILDREN AGE TEN AND UNDER (FORMERLY 8 AND UNDER)**

1. Warn the parent/responsible person verbally that his/her child's behavior is unacceptable and explain appropriate library behavior.
2. If the disruptive behavior continues, the parent/responsible person will be asked to take the child out of the library.
3. If the parent/responsible person refuses or cannot control the child's behavior, then the staff member in charge will call the police. An Incident Report will be filed.
4. Under no circumstances should staff appear to be using force with disruptive patrons.

### **B. CHILDREN AGES 11-17 (formerly 9-18)**

1. Warn the disruptive youth that his/her behavior is unacceptable. The staff member will explain what the appropriate behavior should be. Tell the youth that this is a verbal warning. (If circumstances warrant, i.e. life threatening situations, repeat offenders, damage of library property, verbal abuse, etc., and go immediately to step 3 listed below.)
2. If the disruptive behavior persists, approach the youth and give him/her a second warning. State that this is a second warning and if the disruptive behavior persists, the youth will be asked to leave the library premises.
3. Youth ages 11-17 may be asked to leave after the second warning. If the youth does not have a phone, staff should call a parent/guardian to arrange transportation. If the youth refuses to leave, the staff member in charge should call the police. An Incident Report will be filed.
4. Under no circumstances should staff use force with disruptive youth.
5. When extreme or prolonged situations or instances occur, the Branch Library Manager or Central library staff should consult with the Assistant Director for Community Services(who?) or Central Library for further action.

***Adopted by the Board of Trustees on January 16, 2001. Revised June 10, 2011***



## GREENSBORO PUBLIC LIBRARY PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING UNATTENDED VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Greensboro Public Library strives to provide a warm, welcoming and safe environment for all community members. The Library is particularly concerned for the safety of vulnerable adults\* in and around the Library. A parent/guardian or caregiver 18 years of age or older must be responsible for monitoring the activities and managing the behavior of vulnerable adults during their library visits. Staff cannot be expected to monitor or prevent vulnerable adults from leaving the building/grounds or to assume responsibility for monitoring their behavior.

The Library will adhere to the following guidelines concerning the care and behavior of vulnerable adults:

- Vulnerable adults, who can understand and follow the rules of conduct and who can care for themselves, are welcome to be in the Library unattended.
- Vulnerable adults will be expected to follow the rules of conduct as outlined in the **Guidelines Covering the Use of the Greensboro Public Library**. They should have contact information for a parent/guardian or caregiver who can assist them in an emergency.
- Vulnerable adults who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves must be attended and have adequate supervision at all times.
- Staff will attempt to contact a parent/guardian or caregiver when a vulnerable adult's:
  - health or safety is in doubt
  - behavior disturbs other Library users
  - actions violate any of the **Guidelines Covering the Use of the Greensboro Public Library**
  - parent/guardian or caregiver is not present at closing time.

Every reasonable effort will be made by the staff to assist the vulnerable adult in contacting the appropriate adult. If no responsible adult is reached, or the vulnerable adult is not picked up within 30 minutes of Library closing, staff may notify the police.

*\*A vulnerable adult is an individual 18 or over who is mentally or physically challenged to a degree that significantly impairs the individual's ability to provide adequately for his/her own care or manage his/her own behavior without assistance.*