

## **SECTION X- UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY**

### ***Purpose***

The Manteno Public Library welcomes the use of its resources and facilities by children of all ages. In order to provide a safe environment for everyone that uses the library, the Board of Library Trustees has adopted this policy concerning unattended children. Parents/caregivers should be mindful that the library is a public building and open to all individuals, and that unattended children are vulnerable. Responsibility for children using the library rests solely with the parent/caregiver, not with library staff.

### **Guidelines:**

Illinois law (705 ILCS 405/2-3) states that parents/caregivers must not leave minors under the age of 14 years without supervision for an unreasonable period of time. As a result, the library asks that minors be accompanied by a responsible parent or caregiver who assumes full responsibility for the child's safety and behavior in the library.

Library staff are responsible for providing the best possible service to all patrons and cannot supervise children in the library. Preschool children may not be left unattended in any part of the library.

Even if not present, parents are responsible for and liable for their children's behavior in the library, for damage of materials, equipment, and furnishings, and for injury to themselves and others.

#### **1. Disruptive Behavior:**

Unacceptable behaviors and the consequences of them are described in the By-laws and Policy Section IX. This policy applies to all patrons, regardless of age.

- a. If a child or youth is bothersome or unruly, the library staff will make every attempt to restore appropriate library behavior. If this proves impossible, the disruptive individuals will be asked to wait in the entry way until picked up.
- b. Climbing on tables, shelves, chairs and other furniture is not allowed.
- c. Writing or coloring on walls and removing library labels is not allowed.
- d. Offensive language or inappropriate comments to staff or other patrons is not tolerated and will result in an immediate removal from library.

#### **2. Cleaning Up:**

Out of consideration for others, children should be encouraged to put away puzzles, toys, games and art materials in their proper places. Books should not be re-shelved but left stacked on the "Return" bench.

#### **3. Children aged 5 and Under**

- a. Must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver to use the library.
- b. Must be accompanied to the restroom by a parent or caregiver
- c. Must have a parent or caregiver within sight of the child when using computers.
- d. Parent or caregiver must attend library programs with child.

**4. Children Aged 6-9:**

- a. Children aged nine or younger must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver.
- b. Must be within the visual contact of a parent or caregiver at all times while using the library.
- c. May attend designated library programs without an adult. Parent or caregiver is encouraged to stay in library during library program but in the event that the parent or caregiver leave building they must be available by phone in case of emergency.

**5. Children ages 10 and over:**

May be left on their own to attend library programs or to do homework. Children are allowed to study quietly in small groups of no more than four providing they are not disruptive. Even if the parents or caregiver is not present, the parent/caregiver is responsible for and liable for their children's behavior in the library, for damage of materials, equipment, and furnishings, and for injury to themselves and others.

When the safety of an unattended child is in doubt, or the parent or responsible caregiver cannot be located, the library staff is authorized to call the police and stay with the child until the police arrive.

**6. Unattended Children at Closing Time:**

- a. Unattended children must be picked up at least 15 minutes before closing time.
- b. In the case of a child who is unattended at closing (including emergency), the library staff will try to notify the child's parent or adult caregiver. If the child's parent or adult caregiver cannot be located within 15 minutes, the police will be called.
- c. Children will not be left alone in the library or on library grounds. Two library staff members will wait with the child until the child's parent or adult caregiver, the police, or a protective services worker arrives.
- d. Library staff members will not take the child home or anywhere away from the library site.

**7. Library Responsibilities:**

The library cannot and does not assume responsibility for the safety and well-being of children who are asked to leave the library because of disruptive behavior. If a child who has been asked to leave the library indicates to library staff member that he/she needs transportation home or will not have adequate childcare when he/she reaches home, a library staff member will call the parents/guardians. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, the police will be notified that the child is being asked to leave the library building. The police will take appropriate actions.