

## **Safe Child Policy**

TFML Policy No. 18

The Thomas Ford Memorial Library welcomes children of all ages. Library facilities and staff, however, are not licensed or able to provide for childcare needs in lieu of parental responsibility. The Library encourages parents to consider the safety and well being of their children and the needs of other library users of all ages. In order to promote a safe environment for children, the Library Board of Trustees has developed the following policies for the Library.

### **18.1 General Guidelines**

18.11 Parents and/or caregivers are responsible for teaching their children the proper behavior in a Library and to show respect for other patrons and the Library's collection. All children are expected to follow the Library's general patron behavior guidelines to avoid disturbing other patrons.

18.12 Children under the age of four (4) must remain in the immediate supervising vicinity of an adult or responsible caregiver over the age of 14. A caregiver using an Internet workstation while in the Youth Services Department must be mindful of the behavior of those children under his or her care and not leave them unattended.

18.13 Children under the age of eight (8) must be supervised by an adult or other responsible caregiver over the age of fourteen (14) when using the Library. If a child is uncomfortable being left alone or needs frequent personal assistance we request that the caregiver remain on the same floor as the child.

18.14 Children eight (8) and older may be left unattended at the Library provided their behavior is appropriate for the Library and they are mature enough to stay alone.

18.15 In an effort to make the Youth Services Department as safe a place as possible, adults who are unaccompanied by children and who have no specific need to use the Department's resources or services will not be permitted to use the Department as a work space. Those adults will be directed to other areas of the Library.

### **18.2 Library Programs**

18.21 No child under the age of three (3) may be left in any program or special event alone.

18.22 The responsible adult should remain in the building for any child under age eight (8) so that he/she is available if the child must leave a program due to an emergency or for any other reason. If a child of any age is uncomfortable when a parent or caregiver is not in the Youth Services Department during a program, the parent or caregiver is requested to remain in the Department. Magazines and books from other areas of the Library may, of course, be brought down to the Youth Services Department to be enjoyed by the caregiver during the program.

18.23 In cases where the Library offers programs for children eight (8) years of age and older which do not require a parent or caregiver to be present, the children attending will be supervised by Library staff only for the duration of the program.

18.24 The responsible adult is expected to join the child promptly at the end of the program.

### **18.3 Unattended Children**

18.31 If at any time a child under the age of eight (8) is left unattended, the child will remain at the main desk on the floor of the Library where he/she was found; the responsible adult will be paged over the Library public announcement system. If the adult is not located, Library staff will attempt to telephone the child's parents.

18.32 Generally, if a responsible adult cannot be located within thirty (30) minutes of the discovery of an unattended child, the child will be placed in the custody of the Western Springs Police Department. If, at the discretion of the appropriate Library staff, the situation warrants immediate attention, police may be contacted sooner.

#### **18.4 Library Closing**

18.41 If any child under the age of twelve (12) does not have a responsible adult present when the Library closes, two Library staff members will stay with the child in the foyer of the Library. After waiting fifteen minutes and attempting to contact the responsible adult, the child will be given to the custody of the Western Springs Police Department.

18.42 The Head of Youth Services or Director of the Library may request a conference with the responsible adult for any situation that involves an unattended child.

18.43 An incident report must be written for any situation of an unattended child. A copy of the incident report must be provided to the Library Director.

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