

ROWAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Adopted September 28, 1988 by the Rowan Public Library Board of Trustees: revised May 26, 1993; October 20, 2010; October 23, 2024 (The October 23, 2024 revision incorporates the Unattended Minor at Closing and Unattended Child policies.)

SERVICE OBJECTIVE

Rowan Public Library aims to provide a welcoming, pleasant, and safe environment for every child who visits the library. Children of all ages are encouraged to visit the library, attend programs, and use library materials. In keeping with this service objective, Rowan Public Library has adopted a Child Safety Policy.

Section 1: Supervision

1. Children eight (8) years and younger must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or other responsible caretaker during their entire stay in the library.
 - a. Caretakers must be sixteen (16) years of age or older.
 - b. Children are considered 'accompanied' if they are on the same floor and within sight of the parent, legal guardian, or other responsible caretaker.
 - c. Children eight (8) years and younger attending library sponsored programs need not be accompanied during the program, but their parent, legal guardian, or other responsible caretaker is to remain at the library during the program and must be present at the end of the program.
2. Children nine (9) to eleven (11) years of age must have a parent, legal guardian, or other responsible caretaker inside the library building during their entire stay.
3. Children twelve (12) to seventeen (17) years of age and older are not required to be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or other responsible caretaker.

Section 2: Library Responsibilities

1. Library staff are responsible for
 - a. providing a pleasant and safe environment for every child who visits the library.
 - b. assisting and encouraging children as they develop a love of reading and learning.
 - c. notifying a library manager if they suspect abuse or neglect of a child less than eighteen (18) years of age in accordance with N.C.G.S. 7B-301.
2. Library managers are responsible for working with library staff to report suspected abuse or neglect in accordance with N.C.G.S. 7B-301.
3. It is NOT the responsibility of library staff to
 - a. assume parental responsibility for children, including their care, conduct, and safety.
 - b. provide childcare or act as a disciplinarian.
 - c. physically remove a child from the library or library grounds.
 - d. determine the suitability or authority of anyone arriving or being contacted to transport a child from the library or library grounds.
4. Under no circumstances are library staff allowed to transport children.
5. Under no circumstances is a library staffer to remain alone with an unattended child after closing. Two (2) library staff members must be always present with the child.

Section 3: Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

1. Parents and legal guardians, regardless of whether they accompany their child, are always responsible for
 - a. the conduct, care, safety, and behavior of their child, both within library buildings and on library grounds.
 - b. supervising their child's access to library materials.
 - c. keeping responsible party contact information up to date on their child's library account.
 - d. any actions including, but not limited to, monetary responsibility for property damage or loss caused by their child.

Section 4: Lost or Unattended Children

1. If it is determined a child eleven (11) years and younger is lost or left unattended, library staff shall take immediate and appropriate steps to locate their parent, legal guardian, or caretaker. A staff member shall stay with the child in a public children's area until the parent, legal guardian, or caretaker is located. If they cannot be located or contacted in a reasonable amount of time, a library supervisor will contact local law enforcement to reunite the child with family.
2. In the event a lost or unattended child becomes seriously ill or injured on the premises, staff will contact 911.
3. The library's *Disruptive Behavior Policy* applies to all customers, regardless of age.
 - a. Library staff will determine whether the behavior of an unaccompanied child twelve (12) years of age or older is disruptive and respond appropriately based on the library's *Disruptive Behavior Policy*.
 - b. If library staff deem a child of any age to need supervision and no parent, legal guardian, or caregiver can be located or contacted, law enforcement may be called.

Section 5: Unattended Children at Closing

1. The library aims to ensure the safety of unattended children when the library is closing. Toward this end, library staff shall not leave unattended children fifteen (15) years of age or younger alone in the building or on the grounds after the library has closed.
2. In the event an unaccompanied child fifteen (15) years of age or younger is identified in the building fifteen (15) minutes before closing, staff members will attempt to contact the child's parent or legal guardian. If the parent or legal guardian has not arrived at closing time, two staff members must remain onsite with the child. Children who are not picked up by fifteen (15) minutes after the library closes will be placed in the care of local law enforcement.

Section 6. Use of Designated Children's Areas

1. To promote the active and safe use of areas designated and designed for use by children, adults unaccompanied by children and not in a children's area to obtain juvenile materials for personal use may be asked to leave the space. Adult patrons without children present are not allowed to occupy children's areas for extended periods. Vulnerable or dependent adult use of children's areas should be discussed with a library manager.

END of Child Safety Policy