

## **Safe Child Policy**

TFML Policy No. 18

The Thomas Ford Memorial Library welcomes the use of Library facilities and services by children. Library facilities or 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.

18.13 Children under the age of eight (8) must be supervised by an adult or another 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.

### **18.2 Library Programs**

18.21 No child under the age of four (4) 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 for any reason.

18.23 Some library programs are listed as "independent" for older children. Library staff will supervise children 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 is 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 local authorities. If, at the discretion of the appropriate Library staff, the situation warrants immediate attention, local authorities may be contacted sooner.

### **18.4 Library Closing**

18.41 If any child under the age of eight (8) 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 ten minutes and attempting to contact the responsible adult, the child will be given to the custody of local authorities.

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.

Adopted: January 28, 2003

Revised: July 25, 2006