

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 proper behavior in the Library and to show respect for other patrons, Library staff and Library collections. 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 under the immediate supervision of an adult or responsible caregiver over the age of fourteen (14).

18.13 Children under the age of eight (8) must be supervised in the vicinity of an adult or other responsible caregiver over the age of fourteen (14) when using the Library. The caregiver must remain on the same floor as the child, including during programs with non-parental attendance.

18.14 Children eight (8) and older may be left unattended at the Library provided their behavior is safe and respectful.

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 attend a program without a parent/caregiver.

18.22 During programs that do not require parental/caregiver attendance, caregivers of children under eight (8) must remain in the Youth Services Department to be available for both childcare needs and/or emergencies.

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

18.24 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.

18.3 Unattended Children

18.31 If at any time a child under the age of eight (8) is left unattended, the child will remain with the Library staff at the front desk of the Youth Services Department; and the responsible adult will be paged over the Library public announcement system. If the adult is not located, Library staff will attempt to call 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 placed in 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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