

## Samuels Public Library Safe Child Policy

Samuels Public Library welcomes children of all ages. However, the responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children using the Library rests with the parent or caregiver. A public Library is just that: a public place. As such, anyone can come into it - law abiding or not. A child could be lured away by a stranger or become ill. A child could wander outside and become lost or injured. The Library may have an emergency that dictates closing or evacuating the building, such as inclement weather or fire. It is important that parents monitor the safety and well-being of their children just as if they were in a shopping mall, park, or any other public place.

Library staff members have many duties and cannot supervise children nor act as a substitute daycare. Since we are primarily concerned about a child's safety, we have adopted this policy to help insure his or her welfare.

**Caregivers.** A parent, guardian, or other designated person is responsible for children while they are visiting the Library. It is a parent's or guardian's responsibility to make this determination; however, all caregivers supervising children during their visit to the Library must be at least 15 years of age.

**Premises.** These rules are applicable to the Library building, the garden, the grounds, and the parking lot.

**General Rules.** Children and caregivers must observe these rules while using the Library:

- Children age 11 and under must have a responsible caregiver in the child's immediate vicinity at all times, including at Library programs. If a child age 11 or under is left unattended and a caregiver cannot be located or contacted the Front Royal Police Department will be contacted.
- Children over age 11 may use the Library unattended.

Caregivers are still responsible for the actions of their children even though a child may use the Library unattended under this policy. Regardless of age, all children must have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

**Closings.** The Library has established procedures for closing the Library at normal times and in an emergency. If Library staff believes that a child is unattended prior to closing, the following will be observed:

- In a non-emergency, the child will be asked to identify and/or call a caregiver to confirm that he or she has a ride or will be picked up no later than closing time.
- If a child has been left unattended at the Library at closing time, or at an emergency closing, every effort will be made to contact the caregiver.

- If the child has not been picked up within thirty 30 minutes after a normal closing or at an emergency closing, the Front Royal Police Department will be contacted. Two staff members will stay with the unattended child until the police arrive.
- In an emergency, Library staff will take a child out of the building to another location in accord with the Library evacuation plan.
- In any instance in which the police are called because a child has been left unattended, the staff will reassure the child they are not being punished and that the police are there to help them.
- If possible, staff will leave a note on the Library door stating, “Unattended child is in the custody of the Front Royal Police Department” with the street address and phone number. The names of the child, parent, and guardian will not be listed on the sign. If the emergency is such that a sign cannot be posted, 911 should be called.

**Behavior.** On the Library premises:

- Disruptive behavior is any behavior that disturbs staff or other people while they are using the Library. This includes but is not limited to loud, offensive, abusive, or threatening speech or actions toward anyone.
- Quiet voices should be used inside the main rooms of the Library.
- Running, throwing any object, hitting, bullying, and noisy playing are not allowed.
- Library equipment and furniture must be used with care and only for their intended purposes.
- Pounding on equipment keyboards, running in the Library, running through entrance doors, and other potentially damaging or dangerous activities are not permitted.
- A child whose behavior is disruptive will be approached by a member of the staff and asked to cease that behavior and asked to leave after two warnings.
- If the disruptive behavior continues after the child is asked to leave, the child will be told to leave the Library property. If a child is in the charge of a caregiver, the caregiver must leave as well. Failure to leave the Library property immediately will be grounds for staff to call the Front Royal Police Department for help.

Staff will prepare an incident report for all occasions when a child is asked to leave the Library and contact the child's parent or guardian.