

# Charlotte Community Library

## Unattended Children Policy

A growing concern is the number of young children left unattended in the library. The library is a public building available for the use of all residents. Because it is a place where children gather, it may attract people whose interest in children is not entirely wholesome. The library staff is not responsible for the supervision and safety of children but will intervene if aware of a problem. For the protection and well-being of children who enjoy the library, the following policy has been established:

### Unattended Children:

- Children six years of age or younger must be *continually* attended by a parent or caregiver while in the library.
- Children ten years or younger may not be left in the building without a responsible caregiver under any circumstance.
- Children will be expected to display appropriate behavior, conducive to maintaining a peaceful atmosphere in the building for all patrons. The child will be asked to leave the premises if proper behavior is not maintained.
- Children must know how to reach an adult in case of an emergency, and both the child and adult should be aware of library hours.
- Children attending library programs are supervised by the library staff only during the scheduled time of the program.
- The parents will be notified of any child that has been left too long or repeatedly. If the parents are unable to be contacted, then the police department will be notified. The senior staff member present will make the decision.

### Children Left at Closing:

- The library staff is not responsible for supervising children left alone when the library is closed, but will make attempts to reach a parent or caregiver for immediate pick-up.
- The staff is not permitted to remain after hours with an unattended child or to give him/her a ride home.
- If an adult or family member cannot be reached, the Charlotte Police will be called to escort the child home or to keep the child until parents can be reached.
- Two staff members will stay with the child until the police have arrived.
- The parents will be notified of any child that has been left too long or repeatedly. If the parents are unable to be contacted, then the police department will be notified. The senior staff member present will make the decision.

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### Unattended Children--Staff Procedures

- Two staff members must stay in the library with the child until the parent or caregiver arrives.
- Children left unattended are often frightened and crying and should be comforted by staff.
- The staff member will walk around the library with the child looking for the parent or caregiver.
- When the parent is located, the staff will explain the library policy on unattended children. Parents will be provided with a written copy of the policy if requested.
- All incidents regarding/or concerning this policy will be recorded in the Journal.

Approved by the Library Board on 3/17/2011