



Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield Safe Child Policy

Purpose

The Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield (PLJCS) welcomes children of all ages to visit the library in hopes that they find it to be a fun, inviting, exciting, and safe environment. The library has programs and resources to entice our youth. Through our resources, the library wants to spread the joy of reading and learning for our children.

The library staff encourages children to develop a love of reading and learning in a safe environment, but are not responsible for their care, their supervision, or for accidents or other emergencies that may take place within the library or upon library grounds.

In order to ensure a child's safety and well-being, certain guidelines must be followed.

Responsibility

- Parents/caregivers are responsible for the conduct of their child (under 18) while the minors are on library property regardless of whether they accompany the minor to the library. This includes supervising access to library materials.
- At all times the responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children lies with the parent/caregiver. This includes times when the parent/caregiver is not present within the library building or on library grounds.
- Library staff will determine whether a child's behavior is inappropriate while at the library and will respond to such situations in the manner deemed appropriate based on the Library's Code of Conduct policy.
- Parents/caregivers are responsible for any actions including, but not limited to, monetary responsibility for property damage or loss caused by their children under the age of 18.

Overview

- Children under the age of 10 must be supervised by a parent/caregiver of at least 16 years of age who must remain in the immediate vicinity of the child at all times. Parents/caregivers of children attending library programs supervised by staff are encouraged to participate or remain with their child during the programs. If a child under this age is found without supervision, lost, or frightened, the staff will try to locate the parent/caretaker through the following steps:
 1. The child will be asked if he/she knows which area of the library the caregiver may have visited.
 2. The child will be escorted to that area and if the caregiver is not located, will be escorted around the building in a search. When the parent/caregiver is located, staff will explain the library's policy concerning unattended children.
 3. If the caregiver is not found in the building, a staff member will take the child to the Children's Department and will wait for fifteen minutes before notifying law enforcement. This step would be a last resort.
 4. Staff will give a copy of this policy to the parent/caregiver, and will fill out an incident report including the parent's name, address, etc., as well as the name of the caregiver if this is not a parent.
 5. A copy of the incident report will be filed with Library Administration. If additional incidents take place, law enforcement will be notified.
- Children ages between 10 to 12 must have a parent/caregiver in the library building with them at all times, though the assigned caregiver does not have to be in the immediate vicinity of the child.
- Teens 13 and older may use the library on their own accord provided they comply with all library rules and policies, and have the telephone number of a parent/caregiver who could assist them in an emergency.

Closing

- Arrangements should be made for pickup of any child under the age of 16 at least 15 minutes before library closing time.
- If parent/caregiver contact cannot be established within 15 minutes after closing, library staff will notify the police and the child will be placed in their custody.
- An incident report will be filled out with as much information as is available for reporting purposes and documentation of turning the child over to the police. Library Administration will receive a copy of the incident report.
- Library staff are not permitted to provide transportation for any child after closing. Whenever possible, there should be two staff members to remain with the unattended child after closing.