

# CRAVEN-PAMLICO-CARTERET REGIONAL LIBRARY

## Safe Child Policy

Adopted August 12, 2014

The libraries of Craven-Pamlico-Carteret Regional Library welcome children of all ages to use library materials and services. It is one of our highest priorities to encourage children to develop a love of reading and learning. We all want each child to have a positive experience each time he or she visits the library.

It is our goal to provide a welcoming, stimulating, and safe environment for all library patrons. The libraries are, however, public buildings that anyone can enter and leave without being observed by library staff. Library employees cannot monitor the safety, behavior, or whereabouts of all people using the library. The library does not serve in the capacity of providing daycare for unattended children. **It is ultimately the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to ensure the safety of their children both within the library building and on library grounds.**

### Procedures: Hours Open

Children under 10 years old must be in the presence of a parent or responsible caregiver at all times unless they are attending a library sponsored program, in which case the parent or caregiver must remain in the library building for the duration of the library program. The parent or caregiver is expected to supervise the child and ensure that the child's behavior is not disturbing the program or other library patrons.

Children 10 years old and older may be present in the library unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver. The child must have emergency contact information for his or her parent or caregiver at all times. Unaccompanied children are required to abide by the CPCRL Patron Conduct Policy, and may be asked to leave the library if their behavior is not acceptable after reasonable warning by library employees.

Persons of any age with mental, physical, or emotional disabilities which affect decision-making skills or render supervision necessary must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver at all times.

## **Procedures: Child Safety**

If it is determined that a child is lost or left unattended, the library staff will take appropriate steps to locate the parent or caregiver. A staff member will stay with the child until the parent or caregiver is located.

1. When a staff member finds a young child alone in the library, he or she should determine the child's age and ask the child who accompanied him/her to the library. If the child is younger than 10 years old, the staff member should attempt to locate the parent or caregiver in the immediate area and, upon finding the individual, explain our policy, stressing our concern for child safety.
  - A. If the child has come with older siblings or other children who seem unable to monitor the behavior of the youngest child, the staff member should refer these children to senior staff members.
  - B. The Children's Librarian or senior staff member will determine if the older children need assistance in monitoring the young child, and, if so, ask the children to call an adult or ask the children who have walked to return home. A letter should be sent to the parents explaining why the children were asked to leave, stressing that the children are welcome when they are accompanied by an adult or responsible caregiver.
2. If the parent or caregiver is not easily found, the child will be escorted to the Children's Services office or circulation desk. Library staff members will:
  - A. Designate a place for the child to wait or take the child with them as they search for the adult/caregiver in the area where the child thinks the individual may be.
  - B. Search the entire building and call for the individual. When the individual is found, he/she should be informed of our policy, stressing our concern for the child's safety.
3. If it is determined that the parent/caregiver is not in the building, a senior staff member will attempt to call the child's home.
  - A. If the parent or caregiver is contacted, he/she should be informed of our policy and be asked to come be with the child.
  - B. If the parent or caregiver is not able to be contacted, the child will remain in the designated area until an adult arrives; at which time the procedures for "Unattended Child/Minor at Closing" should be followed. If a parent/caregiver arrives, he/she should be informed of our policy, stressing child safety.

## **Procedures: Unattended Children at Closing**

1. When a library employee observes unattended children/minors on the library premises at the 15 minute warning before closing time, they should encourage the child to be sure transportation has been arranged.

2. When a child is left unattended after the library has closed and is sure someone is coming, at least one library employee will wait with the child for 15 minutes.
3. If no parent or caregiver is located within 15 minutes the library employee should record the child's name, parent's name, address and phone number. The local police should be contacted to take custody of the child. The library employee will remain with the child until the police arrive. Library employees will **never** provide transportation for any child after closing.
4. It may be necessary to post a notice at the front entrance to the library informing anyone looking for the child that he/she has been placed in the care of the local police.
5. The following day it is the responsibility of the person in charge for the previous night to file an incident report with the librarian. A letter will be sent to the parents or caregiver explaining our policy and procedures concerning children and minors.

### **Procedures: Disruptive Behavior**

The CPC Regional Library Patron Conduct Policy applies to all patrons, regardless of age.