

SAFE CHILD POLICY

POLICY:

The Nicholas P. Sims Library endeavors to provide a welcoming, pleasant, and safe environment for all Library users. The Library cannot guarantee the safety of the children who use our facilities. The safety and security of the children are the responsibility of the parent or adult caregiver. The Library does not and cannot act as a baby-sitter or protector of children.

DEFINITION:

- **Unattended child** – a child twelve years old or younger who is at the Library without immediate responsible adult supervision

Responsible adult – a parent, guardian or sibling over the age of sixteen (16).

GUIDELINES:

- **A child under the age of nine** (eight years old or younger) must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times excluding exceptions. Exceptions are children attending a planned, scheduled library program without a parent or caregiver in the room is allowed. However, the parent or caregiver is expected to remain in the Library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.
- **Older children ages nine through age twelve** need responsible adult supervision to ensure their safety, to maintain appropriate behavior, and responsible library use. Although they may be by themselves in the Library, a responsible adult must be on the premises at all times. Staff members will use their judgment and discretion in determining whether or not an unattended child needs supervision.

If a child wishes to leave the Library, the Library staff cannot legally detain him/her.

- Responsible adults should monitor all activities and behavior of their children while they are in the Library. Library staff can request that a child leave the premises if the Library Rules of Conduct are not followed.
- **Unattended Child:** If a child is unaccompanied in the Library and a responsible party cannot be found in a given amount of time (guideline is 30 minutes) the Waxahachie Police Department will be notified. If the police are called when a responsible adult cannot be found, it may be considered “risk of injury to a minor” and is a criminal offense.

- **Unattended Child at Closing Time:** If a child (under 16) is unaccompanied in the Library 30 minutes before closing time, staff may assist the child in calling home to arrange for transportation. Another call may be made 15 minutes prior to closing time. **If the child is not picked up at closing, staff will call police for assistance.** If the police are called when a responsible adult fails to pick up the child, it is considered “risk of injury to a minor” and is a criminal offense.
- Responsible adults are responsible for being aware of the Library’s hours of operation. Responsible adults must also keep in mind that the Library may close unexpectedly for reasons beyond the control of staff, such as a power outage, inclement weather, etc. Children should know who to call should this occur. Under no circumstances will Library staff transport any minor in their personal vehicle.
- The Library is not responsible for unaccompanied children at closing, although library staff will exercise appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of unattended children.
- When a staff member observes suspected abuse or neglect on the part of a responsible adult, staff may contact the police, social services, or another agency about a child in danger at the Library.
- Children, like all other Library users, are required to follow the Library’s rules and regulations.
- Disruptive children will be asked to leave the Library. If the child cannot safely leave the Library to return home on his/her own, staff will permit the child to call a responsible adult. If no responsible adult can be contacted, Library staff will call the police.

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Approved by the Library Board of Trustees