



## **Safe Child Policy**

The Polk County Public Libraries (PCPL) welcome children to enjoy its services. Library staff is committed to helping children develop a love of reading and learning. We want every child to have a positive experience each time he or she visits the library.

Library staff strive to provide safe and welcoming places for people of all ages. The libraries are, however, public buildings and safety cannot be guaranteed. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to ensure the safety of their children both within library buildings and on library grounds.

### **Responsibility**

- Parents and caregivers are responsible for the safety, behavior and care of their children at all times, even if they are not immediately accompanying the child.
- Library staff do not act as child care providers or disciplinarians.
- In accordance with NC GS 14-318.6b effective December 1, 2019, Library staff shall report suspected abuse to appropriate local law enforcement and to the Polk County Department of Social Services at 828-894-2100.

### **Supervision**

- While at PCPL, children age 9 or younger must be accompanied by a parent or responsible caregiver. Children age 7 or younger must be directly supervised at all times. If a caregiver cannot be located, the police or Department of Social Services will be contacted to provide care.
- Children age 10 or older may visit the libraries unattended, at the discretion of a parent or guardian. Unaccompanied children must be mature enough to follow library rules and attend to their own safety.
- Organized groups of children, such as school classes, day care groups and tours, must be supervised by a person age 18 or older at all times while at PCPL.
- If a child has not been picked up at closing time, he or she may be left in the safekeeping of the police. Under no circumstances will library staff transport children or accompany them home.

### **Behavior**

- The PCPL Customer Conduct Policy applies to all customers, regardless of age.
- Unaccompanied children who do not follow the Customer Conduct Policy may be asked to leave the premises if, after a warning, the behavior continues. Children may call a parent or caregiver before being required to leave the library.

Approved by the Board of Trustees of the Polk County Public Libraries

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