



## Library Policies Regarding Children

### A. Purpose

The Jeffersonville Township Public Library welcomes and encourages children to visit the library, use library resources and services, and attend library programs. Children should not be left unattended, as staff members cannot serve as babysitters, teachers, or disciplinarians. Any public place may be dangerous for a child left unattended or a child left stranded after closing hours.

### B. Child Behavior Policy

1. Parents, guardians, or caregivers are responsible for the behavior of their children in the library. They should encourage their children to respect library staff, library property, and the rights of others who use the library.
2. Both library locations provide a play space for parents, guardians, or caregivers and children to interact, socialize, and learn with other families. Adults must supervise activities in these spaces by emphasizing the following guidelines:
  - a. Acting respectfully
  - b. Saying please and thank you
  - c. Using kind words
  - d. Sharing
  - e. Keeping toys and play spaces clean
  - f. Using your imagination
  - g. Keeping baby toys for use by babies
3. Playground behavior or climbing is not appropriate in the library building.
4. Shoes and full-coverage clothing must be worn while on library property.
5. Disruptive or criminal behavior can result in the loss of library privileges.
  - a. Disruptive behavior includes but is not limited to:
    - i. Throwing tantrums
    - ii. Running
    - iii. Shouting
    - iv. Spitting
    - v. Rude actions
    - vi. Horseplay
    - vii. Loud music
    - viii. Eating/drinking
    - ix. Misuse of restrooms
    - x. Blocking walkways
    - xi. Bullying/threatening
    - xii. Cursing
  - b. Criminal behavior includes but is not limited to:
    - i. Child abuse
    - ii. Assault and battery
    - iii. Vandalism
    - iv. Theft
    - v. Intoxication
    - vi. Public indecency
    - vii. Damage to property
    - viii. Drug use/intoxication
    - ix. Sexual activities
    - x. Viewing inappropriate or criminal websites

### **C. Unattended Child Policy**

1. Children 12 years and younger may not be left unattended in the library under any circumstances.
  - a. Children must be supervised by a parent, guardian, or caregiver at least 13 years of age.
  - b. Parents, guardians, or caregivers must ensure this person is a responsible caretaker for the children 12 years and younger.
2. Children 13 years and older may use library services unsupervised. However, parents, guardians, or caregivers are responsible for the children's behavior even if they are not present with the children. An unattended child should know how to reach a parent, guardian, or caregiver; they may use the library business phone in case of an emergency.
3. Any age child that appears lost, confused, afraid, or in distress will receive help from library staff.
4. If it is closing time and the parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be reached, the police will be called.

### **D. Use of Children's Spaces**

The Youth Services area at both library locations and the Pocket Park area at Jeffersonville are designated for the use of children 0 – 18 and their parents, guardians, caregivers, or those in need of youth services resources. All other library users must use the adult areas of the library building.

### **E. Staff Procedures: Disruptive Children Under the Age of 18**

1. When disruptive behavior is recognized, and the parent, guardian, or caregiver is present:
  - a. Staff will inform the child's parent, guardian, or caregiver of the disruptive behavior and explain the behavior policy.
  - b. If the child continues the inappropriate behavior, staff will issue a warning to the parent, guardian, or caregiver.
  - c. If the misbehavior continues, the family will be asked to leave.
  - d. An incident report should be filled out, and the supervisor notified.
2. When disruptive behavior is recognized, and the parent, guardian, or caregiver is not present:
  - a. Staff will inform the child the behavior is disruptive and ask them to use appropriate library behavior.
  - b. If the child continues the inappropriate behavior, staff will issue a warning to the child.
  - c. If the inappropriate behavior still continues, the parent, guardian, or caregiver will be called and asked to pick up the child. If a parent/guardian cannot be contacted within thirty minutes, the police will be called.
  - d. An incident report should be filled out, and the supervisor notified.

### **F. Staff Procedures: Unattended Children Under the Age of 12**

1. If it is determined that a child is lost or unattended, a staff member will accompany the child to try to locate the responsible parent, guardian, or caregiver by:
  - Asking the child where the parent, guardian, or caregiver is
  - Walk around the library with the child to find the adult
  - Paging the responsible person (if the child can provide their name)
2. If the parent, guardian, or caregiver is not found in the library, a staff member will stay with the child until the responsible person is located.

3. If the parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be located within thirty minutes, a library staff member will call the police.
4. A staff member should never take a child out of the library building unless it is for a fire or natural disaster when the safety protocols require the evacuation of the building.
5. An incident report should be filled out, and the manager/director notified.

Adopted by the  
Jeffersonville Township Public Library Board of Trustees  
on November 16, 2021; Updated October 18, 2022