

## **SAYREVILLE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

### **2.5 UNATTENDED CHILDREN/MINORS POLICY**

The Sayreville Free Public Library welcomes visitors of all ages to use its facilities, materials, programs and services. The *Code of Conduct for Library Visitors* (Section 2.4) is enforced in order to create a safe, orderly and proper environment for all users. Service to children and minors is an important part of the Library's mission and the Library Board and staff are dedicated to providing a safe, secure, welcoming and comfortable place. Parents/guardians should be aware that the Library is a public building open to all individuals.

Parents/guardians are responsible for their child's safety and behavior while in the Library whether the parent/guardian is present or not. Library employees cannot and will not function as caregivers or babysitters. The Library assumes neither responsibility nor liability for the actions, care, supervision or safety of children and/or minors.

Children and minors are expected to follow the same rules of conduct as adult patrons at all times and are subject to the same consequences if the rules are violated. Parents or guardians will be held responsible for damage to Library items, materials, equipment or facilities caused by their minor child, whether such child was unattended or not.

The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of young library users:

1. Children are defined as anyone who is thirteen (13) years or under. Minor is defined as anyone over the age of thirteen (13) up to and through the age of twenty-one (21).
2. All children shall abide by the Rules of Conduct for Library Visitors.
3. No child who is ten (10) years of age or younger shall be left alone in the Library or on the Library premises for any reason whatsoever.
4. For a child six (6) years of age or younger, the parent/caregiver shall actively supervise the child. This entails, at a minimum, remaining in the child's immediate vicinity and within visual contact at all times. If such a child is attending a Library program without a parent/caregiver in the room, the parent/caregiver shall remain in the Library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program. If such a child is found unattended, under-attended or ignored, Library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the Library, inform him/her of the rules and issue a warning. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended or under-attended again, the police may be called for assistance as needed.
5. Children who are eleven (11) years of age and through the age of thirteen (13) years

may use the Library on their own. However, parents are still responsible for the safety and behavior of their child. Children behaving inappropriately may be asked to leave the Library, in accordance with the Rules of Conduct for Library Visitors.

6. Minors who are over thirteen (13) years of age may also use the Library on their own. However, both the minor and his/her parent shall be responsible for the safety and behavior of the minor. Minors behaving inappropriately may be asked to leave the Library, in accordance with the Behavior Policy/Code of Conduct. If a minor requires close supervision or significant individual attention, the minor should not use the Library on their own.

7. All unattended minors **must** have the telephone number of a parent or guardian with them at all times. In the event of an emergency or unexpected closing or the ejection of a minor/children from the Library, the minor/children will be given the opportunity to call a parent or guardian before leaving the premises. If, in the judgment of Library Staff, the minor/child is too young to leave the Library unescorted, the police will be summoned.

8. Parents/caregivers who permit their unattended children/minors to use the Library shall be responsible for knowing the opening and closing times of the Library. This information is posted on the Library doors, on the Library website and is given on the Library's telephone recording. If an unattended child is left at the Library after the Library closes, two (2) staff members will remain behind until police arrive to escort the minor home. Under no circumstances shall Library staff take an unattended child out of the Library or transport him or her to another location.

9. In case of an unanticipated closing of the building, all unattended minors/children will be given the opportunity to contact their parents/guardians before leaving the premises. If, in the judgment of Library Staff, a minor/child is too young to leave the Library unescorted, the police will be summoned. In the event of an emergency, staff will call 9-1-1.

***Neither the Director nor any other member of the Library staff is a professional medical or legal expert. All actions undertaken pursuant to this Policy shall be subject to the reasonable judgment of the Director and Library staff.***

***The Sayreville Free Public Library will be consistent in enforcing this Policy to ensure the safety of patrons and staff and create an environment that is conducive to the proper use of Library materials, facilities, programs and services.***

***Individuals who require an accommodation of this Policy on medical, religious or other grounds may contact the Library Director.***