

**WINFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY
UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY POLICY**

January 2011

WINFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY
POLICY FOR UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY

I. POLICY FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF SIX

Children under age six must be directly supervised by an adult (defined as 18 years of age or older) or parent. The parent or caretaker must remain with the child so as to constantly observe the child. The parent or caretaker must remain in the building during library programs attended by the child.

Procedures in the event of violations:

- 1. Library personnel will talk with a child who appears to be unattended. If the caretaker is in the library, the librarian in charge will explain this policy.*
- 2. If the caretaker is not in the library the child will be supervised by staff for up to one hour. During this hour, the librarian in charge will attempt to contact the child's parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will be asked to pick up the child from the library. The librarian in charge will explain this policy to the parent /guardian. If the child is not picked up within one hour of the librarian in charge's contact, the police will be called.*
- 3. If no parent /guardian can be reached in the first hour of library personnel supervision of the child, the police will be contacted.*

II. POLICY FOR CHILDREN AGES SIX TO SEVENTEEN

Children between the ages of six and seventeen are free to utilize the library unattended as long as needed, provided their behavior is not disruptive to other patrons or library personnel. Exceptions to this are cases of suspected child neglect or truancy.

Suspected neglect may include a child being left at the library on a repetitive basis for long periods of time (more than one hour) or a single incidence of four hours with little attempt to use library resources appropriately. Truancy includes attendance at the library of a school-aged child during regular school hours.

Children are expected to have transportation away from the library grounds at closing time.

Procedures:

Suspected child neglect—Library personnel will advise the librarian in charge of the suspicion of child neglect. The librarian in charge will contact the parent/guardian to determine if the child is to be using library facilities appropriately or if there is a problem that the Library Director can refer to another agency for family assistance.

If neglect continues, the Library Director will contact the parent/guardian in writing stating the problem, citing library policies and the infractions that have caused the need for contact, and state that the police will be contacted if the problems continue. If the problem persists, the Library Director will contact the police.

Truancy—Library personnel will advise the librarian in charge of a suspicion of truancy. The child shall be requested to show evidence of a legitimate cause for absence from school. If the child is unable to do so, the librarian in charge shall contact the school and the parent/guardian. If a child withholds identification, the police will be contacted.

Children left at the library after closing—Library closing announcements will be made fifteen minutes before closing the library. If a child needs to notify a parent, s/he will be allowed to use the library phone for a nominal fee.

If no parent/guardian comes to pick up a child by ten minutes after closing time, the police will be called. Evening staff will wait with the child until the police arrive.

III. DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Disruptive behavior is not permitted in the library or on library property.

Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to: Inappropriate or abusive language, fighting, running, failure to heed library staff requests, loud talking, littering, jumping on furniture, playing radios so as to disturb other people, public display of affection, and gathering in groups which disturb other patrons or staff.

More serious disruptive behavior may include, but is not limited to: Activating fire or emergency alarms, theft, defacing or abusing library property, any acts of vandalism, threatening staff or other patrons, behaving under the influences of alcohol or controlled substances and acts of public indecency.

Procedures:

- 1. A child exhibiting disruptive behavior will be given a verbal warning and notified of this policy.*
- 2. If the child continues to be disruptive, a second verbal warning will be given at which time the library personnel handling the situation will request identification. The child will be informed that a letter will be mailed to the child's residence informing the parent/guardian of the problem. (See Appendix A)*
- 3. If the disruptive behavior continues, the child may be asked to leave the library. The librarian in charge may call the child's residence for the child if transportation is needed.*
- 4. If a child refuses to give the necessary identification, the librarian in charge shall inform the child that the police will be contacted and they will contact the child's parent/guardian. If identification is still refused, the police will be contacted.*

IV. TELEPHONE CALLS

Patrons may not receive calls on the library's telephone. In cases of emergency, this policy may be waived at the discretion of library staff.

VI. SYNOPSIS

A synopsis of this policy is posted on the library bulletin board at all times. (See Appendix B)

VII. PROVISION FOR REVIEW

The Board of Trustees of the Winfield Public Library shall review and/or revise this policy annually.

Signed and adopted by the Winfield Library Board of Trustees the 12th day of January 2011.

President of the Winfield
Library Board of Trustees

Secretary

Sample letter to be printed on Winfield Library letterhead

Your child, _____, has exhibited disruptive behavior in the Winfield Public Library. He/She has been given at least one verbal warning and has been informed about the policy regarding disruptive behavior. This notice is being sent to you so that you may discuss this situation with your son/ daughter and insure that this behavior does not continue.

If this behavior continues, your child will be prohibited from the Winfield Public Library. This decision may be discussed with the Winfield Public Library board of Trustees.

Please contact me with any questions you may have regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXXX
Library Director