

## SOUTH PARK TOWNSHIP LIBRARY BOARD

Unattended Child Policy Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees,

Oct. 12, 2004

Policy Revised: October 16, 2021

### Basis for Policy:

The South Park Township Library both welcomes and encourages the use of the library by children. As an institution that supports lifelong learning and as a public building it is dedicated to serving all members of its community.

The Unattended Child Policy is in place as a means of protecting the safety of the children who use the library and ensuring and defining appropriate library behavior that supports a fair, comfortable, user-friendly environment for all its community of users.

The library staff is not responsible for the safety or behavior of children who enter the library.

### Policy Statement:

Parents/caretakers are responsible for the behavior and safety of the child at all times while in the library building or on its premises. A caretaker is defined as a legal adult (18 years of age or older) who acknowledges responsibility for the child. Children 12 years of age or younger must remain in the direct company of the parent or caretaker.

The legal guardian of children 12 years or younger who are in the library unattended by a legal adult/ caretaker will be contacted by the library staff and asked to come to the library to retrieve or accompany their child. If contact is not successful, the child will be given to the custody of the police who will make contact with the child's legal guardian.

### Unattended Children at Closing Time:

- \* Parents are responsible for knowing the Library's hours of operation.
- \* Staff will attempt to contact a parent or caretaker who is responsible for the unattended child.
- \* If no parent/caretaker has arrived at the Library 15 minutes after closing time, or contact time, the staff will call the Police Department. Police and staff will monitor the child until the parent/caretaker arrives.
- \* Staff will record the parent's/caretaker's name, address, telephone number and the child's name.
- \* Once the parent/caretaker has arrived at the Library they will be handed a copy of the Unattended Child Policy.
- \* The police will be notified of any additional incidents.
- \* In circumstances where no parent/caretaker for the child can be contacted or no parent/caretaker arrives at the Library after a reasonable amount of time the child will remain in the care of the Police Department.

#### Minors over the Age of 12 at Closing Time:

The following procedures will be followed for any minor or individual that is unable to independently transport themselves from the library at closing time:

- \* Staff will attempt to contact a parent or caretaker who is responsible for the unattended individual.
- \* If no parent/caretaker has arrived at the Library 15 minutes after closing time, or contact time, the staff will call the Police Department. Police and staff will monitor the individual until the parent/caretaker arrives.
- \* Staff will record the parent's/caretaker's name, address, telephone number and the child's name.
- \* The police will be notified of any additional incidents.
- \* In circumstances where no parent/caretaker for the individual can be contacted or no parent/caretaker arrives at the Library after a reasonable amount of time the individual will remain in the care of the Police Department.

Appropriate Behavior: Parents/caretakers are responsible for monitoring the behavior of their children at all times within the library. Appropriate behavior for children follows the Library's policy for appropriate behavior for all library patrons. (See Patron Behavior Policy)

#### Noncompliance:

##### Disruptive Children 12 Years of Age or Younger:

- \* Parent/caretaker will be made aware of the child's inappropriate behavior.
- \* If the parent/caretaker either refuses or is unable to control the child the librarian in charge will ask the family to leave.
- \* If the parent /caretaker refuse to leave the library then the library reserves the right to contact the police.

##### Disruptive Unattended Children 12 Years of Age or Younger:

- \* Child will be asked to behave.
- \* The library will then follow the portion of the document for Unattended Children at Closing Time in the library.

##### Disruptive Children Over 12 Years of Age:

- \* Child will be given an oral warning.
- \* If, after 10 minutes, the inappropriate behavior continues the child will be asked to leave the library for the day.
- \* Certain disruptive behavior will constitute immediate action, as all patrons are subject to the Patron Behavior Policy (see Patron Behavior Policy)
- \* If the child refuses to leave the library the Police Department will be contacted.

#### Neglected or Abused Children:

In Compliance with the State of Pennsylvania Child Protective Service Law the South Park

Library staff are mandated child abuse reporters. All staff have met the Act 31 training requirements of mandated child abuse reporters. If the Library staff suspects that a child is neglected or abused they have been mandated to file a report to Pennsylvania Department of Human Services ChildLine at (412) 473-2000. The staff will also immediately call 911 to alert the police department.