

## **Lyons Regional Library District Unattended Children Policy**

The Lyons Regional Library District is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for patrons of all ages. Sharing this environment with other people requires that everyone follow the Library Behavior Policy.

The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern of the library staff. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with library personnel; neither the Library nor its staff members act "in loco parentis" (in place of parents). Library employees cannot be responsible for children who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior. At all times, parents or caregivers are responsible for their child's behavior and safety. Parents and caregivers acknowledge the risk and their own responsibility of leaving a child unattended in the library. Parents and caregivers release the Library, the District, and Staff from all claims which they may have or which they may have on behalf of their child/ward. The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of young library users.

An unattended child is a child of any age who is apparently unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver. Children who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves may not be left alone in the library or on library grounds at any time and must have adequate supervision from a caregiver.

**Children under the age of 8** must have a parent/caregiver in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child. The assigned caregiver must be a responsible person and must carry emergency contact information. An exception would be children attending a library program without a parent/caregiver in the room. However, the parent/caregiver is expected to remain readily available in the building and able to join the child at the end of the program.

If a child in this age group is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library and inform them of the rules. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended again, the police will be called for assistance.

The library and its staff members will not, under any circumstances, be responsible for determining whether an apparent parent/caregiver is a legally authorized caregiver.

**Children age 8 and older** may use the library unattended provided they are capable of following the LRLD's Behavior Policy and are able to care for themselves; otherwise they should be adequately supervised by a parent or caregiver. Parents/caregivers are still responsible for the actions and the well-being of their children.

Children using inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the library. All unaccompanied children at the library should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them if they are asked to leave or in the event of an emergency.

It is the responsibility of parents/caregivers to make sure their children have transportation to and from the library. If a child is alone at the library at closing and appears to be vulnerable, library staff will attempt to call a parent/caregiver. If staff cannot reach a parent/caregiver, or said adult is not available to pick up their child then staff are authorized to contact law enforcement.