

## Lyons Regional Library District Safe Child Policy

The Lyons Regional Library District ("the District" or "the Library") is committed to providing a safe, welcoming environment that encourages children of all ages to belong, discover, and learn through use of our resources, spaces, and experiences. While Library staff support children and their caregivers in using Library services, the vices, the Library does not provide childcare and does not assume responsibility for the safety or supervision of unattended children.

### Definitions

- **Child:** Any individual under the age of 18.
- **Parent/Caregiver:** A person aged 16 or older who is legally responsible for the child and can ensure the child's safety and appropriate behavior.
- **Unattended Child:** A child who is apparently unaccompanied by a parent/caregiver or who appears unable to care for themselves.

**General Expectations** Children are expected to behave appropriately for their age and follow the Library Behavior Policy. It is the responsibility of parents/caregivers to ensure that their children understand proper conduct in the Library and know how to contact a responsible adult in case of an emergency.

### Supervision Requirements

- Children under the age of **8** must be accompanied and directly supervised by a parent or caregiver in all areas of the Library. If a child in this age group is found unattended, Library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the Library. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended again, the non-emergency Dispatch number may be called. Library staff is not responsible, under any circumstances, for determining whether a parent/caregiver is a legally authorized caregiver.
- Children **under age 8** may attend Library programs without a parent/caregiver in the room, provided the caregiver remains in the Library and is immediately accessible.
- Children aged **8 and older** may use the Library unattended, provided they understand and follow Library rules and policies. Staff may ask any unaccompanied child to leave if they are disruptive or unsafe. Children must know how to reach a parent/caregiver in case of an emergency, and both the child and the parent/caregiver are expected to be aware of and follow the Library's operating hours. If a parent/caregiver cannot be reached, staff may contact the non-emergency Dispatch number.

**Library Closing Procedures:** It is the responsibility of parents/caregivers to ensure their children have transportation from the library. If an unattended child is left at the Library after closing time, staff will attempt to contact a parent/caregiver. If no responsible adult can be reached within 15 minutes of closing, staff may contact the non-emergency Dispatch number. Under no circumstances will staff transport or remain alone with a child.

**Responsibility and Liability:** Parents/caregivers are solely responsible for the behavior and safety of their children at all times, whether or not they are present. To the extent permitted by law, they release the Library, its staff, and the District from liability for injuries, accidents, or other incidents arising from a child being left unattended or otherwise in violation of any Library policy.

**Child Sexual Abuse Prevention (SB21-088)** In accordance with Colorado Senate Bill 21-088 (the Child Sexual Abuse Accountability Act), the Library has adopted protective measures to minimize the risk of child sexual abuse:

- **Prohibited Behavior:** Staff and volunteers shall not engage in any behavior or contact of a sexual, exploitative, or abusive nature with a child, including but not limited to:
  - Touching the intimate parts of a child.
  - Engaging in sexually explicit conversations with a child, in person or via any device.
  - Exposing a child to nudity or simulated/actual sexual acts.
- **Protective Measures:**
  - At least two adults, including at least one Library staff member or trained volunteer, shall be present during programs involving children.
  - Library staff and volunteers shall not be alone with a child in a closed room without a line of sight.
  - Youth-designated spaces are reserved for use by children and accompanying caregivers; adults without a child may be asked to use other areas of the Library.
  - All staff and volunteers working directly and solely with minors must undergo background checks and/or reference reviews before assignment.
  - Physical expressions of affection (e.g., hugs) should be approached with caution and professional discretion.
  - Staff and volunteers shall never physically discipline, restrain, or threaten a child.

**Mandatory Reporting:** Under Colorado Revised Statutes §19-3-304, any employee or volunteer of the Library who has direct contact with children and has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect must immediately report it to local law enforcement, the county department of human services, or the statewide child abuse

hotline at 1-844-CO-4-KIDS. Staff must also inform the Library Director or designee within 24 hours of making a report.

Reports made in good faith are protected by law from civil or criminal liability. The Library will provide periodic training to ensure staff and volunteers understand their reporting responsibilities under state law and SB21-088.

**Internet Use and Public Access:** The Library uses content filters on public internet terminals in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Staff do not monitor internet use but may intervene if a child accesses inappropriate content or violates Library policy.

**Review and Revisions:** This policy shall be reviewed at least every three years or upon changes in Colorado state law or Library procedures.

**Approved and Adopted by the Lyons Regional Library District:** September 20, 2022

**Revised and Adopted by the Lyons Regional Library District:** August 26, 2025