

## **BAY COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM CHILDREN'S USE OF THE LIBRARY POLICY -**

The Bay County Library System strives to maintain a safe environment conducive to the welfare of all users of its facilities. Library staff is not responsible for providing supervision or care of children. The parent, legal guardian, or caregiver is responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behavior of children.

Children will not be denied access to the adult collections merely because they are juveniles. Final selection of materials is the responsibility of the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver.

All children age 9 or younger must be attended and adequately supervised by a responsible adult or adolescent of 14 years or older. Children from the age of 10 or older may use the library unattended subject to the Rules of Conduct of the Bay County Library System.

Children ages 6 - 9 may attend library sponsored programs independently, however, a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver must remain in the library throughout the program.

If children age 10 or older are not using the library for any of its intended purposes, or are violating the library's Rules of Conduct, they will be asked to leave. If this should occur, and the children cannot return home for any reason, the library reserves the right to contact the police.

Any unattended child age 9 or younger should be reunited by staff with the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver. Staff should ensure the child is not left alone while locating the person who is responsible for the child to reunite them.

If staff is unable to locate a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, page them using their name, if known. Staff should not announce that there is a missing child or the child's name, for the child's protection.

When the parent or caregiver is located, politely and discreetly remind them that it is not the responsibility of library staff to supervise or care for the child.

If the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver is not found in the building, a staff member should stay with the child in a public area while an attempt is made to make contact via telephone. Inform him or her of the library's concern for the child's safety, and request they pick up the child. If he or she cannot be located, staff should call 911 and report it to the police.

## Children Left in the Library at Closing Time

At 20 minutes before closing time staff should do a walk around and identify children who are in need of a ride home. Staff should use their best judgment to determine if an unattended young person is capable of getting themselves home. Staff should make attempts to contact a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver who can come and give the child a ride home. If no contact is made by 10 minutes after closing time, call 911 and ask the police to come and pick up the child. Two staff members should stay in the building with the child until the police arrive.

Any time the police are called a BCLS Patron Conduct Report form should be completed, reviewed by the Managing Librarian, and forwarded to the administrative office.

4/26/2023 board approved