

Minor Children in the Library and Behavior of Patrons

Lafourche Parish Public Library (LPPL) welcomes people of all ages to utilize its programs, facilities, collections and services. In order to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young adults who use the library the following policy regarding unattended minors and its appropriate use is adopted. **The Library Board of Control does not place upon any staff member the role of baby sitter, caregiver, or loco parentis. Staff shall not be responsible for welfare of children left unsupervised in the library for any period of time.**

Rules and Guidelines

Use of Children's Library

The materials, services and equipment in the LPPL's Children's Areas are intended for the use by children, their parents and caregivers, and others needing children's materials and services for some specific purpose. All other customers are asked to use the adult areas of the library.

Unattended Minors

Lafourche Parish Library System defines an unattended minor as any young person under the age of eighteen who is unaccompanied by a responsible adult aged 18 and older, and who is unable to care for his or her self, or use the library responsibly.

Inappropriate and irresponsible behavior may include but are not limited to: 1) disruptive behavior, such as running, shouting, climbing, rude actions, horseplay, etc.; 2) verbal or physical abuse to staff or customers such as cursing, rude or demeaning comments, talking back to the library staff or customers, hitting, biting, punching, teasing other customers, and bullying other patrons etc.; and 3) damage to property of the library or of customers such as breaking or ruining supplies or property, improper use of the furniture or equipment, theft, vandalism, etc.

Parents or adult caregivers are legally responsible for the welfare and behavior of their children; the library is not responsible for unattended children. Library staff may refer children who are left unattended to the appropriate authorities including the sheriff or child welfare agencies.

Children under age 9

Any child under the age of nine (eight years old or less) must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times. An exception exists for children attending age appropriate planned, scheduled library programs without a parent or caregiver in the room. However, the parent or caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

Children age 9 through age 11

Older children ages nine through eleven may need adult supervision to ensure their safety and to maintain appropriate behavior and responsible library use. Although they may be by themselves in the library a parent or caregiver must be in the premises at all times. Staff members will use their judgment and discretion in determining whether or not an unattended child needs a parents or caregiver for supervision.

Young adults ages 12 and up

LPPL recognizes that many young adults are responsible enough to be in the library without adult supervision. However, if library staff identifies behavioral issues or recognizes that a young adult cannot use the library responsibly on their own, staff may ask young adults to leave the premises. Additionally, parents may be contacted, and if continuous behavioral issues occur, a young adult may be required to have a parent or caregiver present while using the library or, in some cases a young adult may be banned or have library privileges suspended at the discretion of the director.

Behavior

Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Library staff will ask children to comply with library rules and instructions. Children and young adults whose behavior are disruptive and have been given 1 warning will be asked to leave if the behavior continues.

Closing

At closing time any unattended children who have not been picked up and phone calls cannot reach a parent after 15 minutes local law enforcement will be called for the child's safety. **Under NO circumstances should a staff member drive a child home.**