



Library Standard Operating Procedures

Approved by the Library Board: March 15, 2013

Minors in the Library

PURPOSE

To provide for the protection and safety of the children of this community.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all library patrons.

POLICY

Library staff strive to ensure that all buildings are operated in a safe manner. However, because public libraries are open to all, libraries cannot be considered safe places for unattended minors. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of minors in the Library rests with the parents, legal guardians, or other responsible adult caregivers (hereinafter “parent or responsible caregiver”). Library staff are not responsible for the care and safety of unattended minors in the library.

PROCEDURES

- Children age 9 and unders must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult caregiver. A parent or responsible caregiver must remain with the child at all times.
- If a child age 9 or younger is found to be unaccompanied in the Library, staff will try to locate the parent or responsible adult caregiver to remedy the situation. If a parent or responsible adult caregiver is unavailable, the Police, Santa Clara County Child Protective Services or other appropriate government agency will be called.
- Children age 10 and older, including teens, may use the Library without a parent or responsible adult caregiver present, but must be able to reach a parent or responsible adult caregiver immediately, either in person or by phone. (Library phones are available for this use). All children and minors (including teens) in the Library must follow the posted Rules of Conduct in the Library and are expected to use the Library appropriately. Children and minors (including teens) who do not follow these rules are subject to the same consequences as other library users, including being required to leave the Library or losing library privileges.

- Situations may arise when, due to unusual or emergency circumstances, it may be necessary for the Library to close without prior notice. In this event or in the case of other emergencies, unaccompanied minors age 17 years or younger, who cannot transport themselves, must be able to reach a parent or responsible adult caregiver for immediate pick-up.
- The Library does not observe the same schedule every day. Parents or responsible adult caregivers should be aware of library closing times. If a child remains at the Library after hours, staff may make an attempt to contact a parent or responsible adult caregiver, but also may, immediately and without recourse, contact the Police, Santa Clara County Child Protective Services or other appropriate government agency. Staff will not transport a child nor will a child be allowed to sit in a staff person's vehicle.
- The Children's area of the Library is reserved for children, their parents or responsible adult caregivers, and adults interested in children's literature, such as teachers and college students taking children's literature classes. Out of concern for the safety of young patrons, adults who are unaccompanied by a child or children in the children's area of the Library may be approached by staff, and may be asked to move to another area of the Library.
- The teen area of the Library is reserved for teens in grades 6-12 and those younger or older library users who are interested in teen literature, such as teachers and college students taking young adult literature classes. Out of concern for the safety of young adults, adults in the teen area of the Library may be approached by staff, and may be asked to move to another area of the Library.
- If it is unsafe for a minor to leave the building without an adult, the minor should never be left unattended in the Library.
- PARENTS AND ADULT CAREGIVERS, NOT LIBRARY STAFF, ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BEHAVIOR AND SAFETY OF THEIR CHILDREN AND MINORS WHILE ON THE PREMISES OF THE LOS GATOS LIBRARY.