SSCHPL
Steger-South Chicago Heights Public Library

Safe Child Policy

The Steger-South Chicago Heights Public Library is committed to serving the children of the community through exemplary programming, collection development and customer service. This commitment extends itself to the safety of children while at the library, and this policy has been designed to insure that your child's experience at the library is a positive one. We ask that parents recognize that the library is a public place and that staff members are not licensed childcare professionals and that we are no substitute for parental responsibility. This Safe Child Policy was created by the Library Board of Trustees to establish a policy and procedures that will minimize the safety risk to children in the library, and help the staff in dealing with disruptive or unattended children.

Policy

Parents or other caregivers are solely responsible for the welfare and behavior of the children using the library. Children under the age of 10 must be supervised by a responsible caregiver 18 years of age and up at all times when in the library. If a child under the age of 10 is found to be unattended anywhere in the library (or an older child that is unattended and in distress), staff will attempt to locate the child's parent or caregiver. If the library staff cannot locate the parent or caregiver within the building they will try to elicit a phone number for a responsible adult.

After being called, the caregiver has 30 minutes to come to the library and take responsibility for the child in question. After 30 minutes or if the caregiver cannot be located the Steger police will be called and the child will be placed in their custody.

- Children under the age of 6 must be directly supervised and within sight of their caregiver at all times.
- Children under the age of 6 must remain within the same area as the parent/caregiver unless the child is attending a program, and then the caregiver must remain within the building.
- Children 10 and over may be left unattended in the library provided they are mature enough to understand and follow the library's rules and behave in a proper manner.
- Disruptive children are subject to the same rules as adult patrons in the library, and if caregivers cannot be located in the library then the Steger police will be notified and placed in their custody.
- Children 17 and under are at risk and will not be left unattended by staff after closing. If the caregiver has not picked the child up within 15 minutes of closing the staff will call the Steger police and the child will be placed in their custody.
- Library staff will not transport children home.

Procedures

Unattended Children during public hours:

If the parent/caregiver is in the building the youth services staff will look for the caregiver, reunite with the child and explain policy.

If the parent/caregiver is not in the building

- Staff will alert the library's supervisor
- Try to obtain a name and phone number for a parent/caregiver
- Stay with the child until parent/caregiver arrives
- Explain policy to parent/caregiver & give a copy of policy
- Write an incident report
- If the parent/caregiver does not arrive within 30 minutes then the staff will call the Steger police and place the child in their custody.
- Any unattended children in the library past 7:00 pm will be notified by staff that they need to secure a ride home prior to closing.

Unattended Children at Closing

- Children will be asked if they have a ride home 15 minutes prior to closing. If not, they will be allowed to use the library's telephone if necessary.
- Staff will obtain names, telephone numbers and library card numbers for children left after closing.
- 2 staff members must remain with the child until either the police or the parent/caregiver assumes responsibility for the child.
- If 15 minutes after the library closes and the child is still at the library the staff will call the Steger police and ask them to assume responsibility for the child.
- Staff may leave after the police have the child in their custody.
- Staff will write an incident report at the time of the incident.

Adopted: June 2009
Revised: November 2015