



# CHEROKEE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

## SAFE CHILD POLICY

### *Statement of Philosophy*

The Cherokee County Public Library welcomes children of all ages. It is a doorway through which life-long learning takes place. The library is a public building and, as such, anyone can come into it. It is important that parents monitor the safety and well-being of their children just as if they were in a shopping mall, park, or any other public place.

No public place, including the Library, can guarantee the safety of children. A child could be tempted to go off with a stranger. He/she could get injured, become ill, wander outside or get mixed in with a school group and become lost. Any of these or other emergencies could take place in a public building.

The Library staff is here to serve you and has many duties to perform in order to help all users of the library in the best possible way. As a result, they cannot monitor the whereabouts or behavior of our smallest users – your children. Library staff cannot assume the responsibility of a child's care when they use the Library. Therefore, the behavior and welfare of children in the library are the responsibility of the parents, legal guardians or responsible caregivers of the child.

We expect parents and/or caregivers to be responsible for teaching their children the proper behavior in a Library and respect for other patrons and books. All children are expected to follow the Library's general patron behavior guidelines as to not be disruptive to other patrons. We also expect children in the library to make effective use of their library visit, which could include reading books or magazines, working on special reading or writing assignments, or attending children's programs.

### **It is for the safety of each child that the Cherokee County Public Library adopted this Safe Child Policy.**

The Library asks parents, guardians and responsible caregivers to observe these rules to keep their children safe:

1. A responsible caregiver must be at least fourteen (14) years of age.
2. Children of age 5 and under shall be supervised at all times in the immediate presence of a parent or other responsible caregiver identified by parent/guardian. Parents or the responsible caregiver may not leave young children unattended while using other areas of the library.
3. Children ages 6 through 11 must have a parent or responsible caregiver within sight unless the child is attending library programs. However, the parent or caregiver should not leave the library while a child is attending library programs, in case of emergency.
4. Children ages 12 through 17 may use the Library unattended for any length of time as long as their conduct is acceptable in a library setting and general conduct rules are observed. Parents or guardians will be notified of disruptive behavior.
5. Children of any age with mental, physical, or emotional disabilities which may affect decision making skills or render supervision necessary must be accompanied by a parent or responsible caregiver at all times.
6. Parents or responsible caregivers must sit with children 12 and under who use the Internet. (See Internet Acceptable Use Agreement)

### **Children must know how to reach an adult in case of an emergency, and both children and adults need to be aware of library hours.**

The Library has established procedures for closing the Library. If it is apparent to a library staff member that a child is unattended thirty (30) minutes prior to closing, the following will be observed:

1. The child will be asked to call a parent or otherwise confirm that he or she has a ride or will be picked up no later than closing.
2. If a child has been left unattended at the library at closing time, or during an emergency closing, every effort will be made to contact the parents or legal guardians.
3. If parent or guardian does not arrive within fifteen (15) minutes of closing, the child will be treated as an abandoned child and the police will be contacted. Two staff members will stay with the unattended child/children until the police arrive. This is compensated time for the two staff members who remain with the child.
4. Under no circumstances will library staff take a child out of the building and transport him or her to another location, or remain in the building alone with an unattended child. Staff will make all efforts to reassure the child.
5. Staff members will leave a note on the Library door stating, "Unattended child is in the custody of the Gaffney City Police", with a contact number. Names will NOT be stated on the sign.
6. Parents or guardians of unattended children will be contacted by the Library Director and given a copy of the Safe Child Policy. Any additional incidents will be reported to the police.

**Your cooperation and adherence to this policy will help us to  
maintain a pleasant and safe environment  
in your public library.**