



CITY OF BRYAN
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Public Library

Safe Children Policy

The Bryan + College Station Public Library System welcomes children of all ages. Children are important and deserve attention, supervision, positive interaction and love. We provide materials, services and programs for the benefit of children in our community. We are dedicated to providing a welcoming, fun, and safe environment for all library customers.

The safety of children in the library is a serious concern to library staff and the Library Advisory Board. The libraries are public buildings and as such, anyone can enter them. Library staff have many duties to perform in order to serve all library customers. They cannot monitor the whereabouts of customers, including children. *Staff cannot assume responsibility for the care and safety of unattended children in the library.* Parents and responsible caregivers are expected to provide supervision for children in the library.

We especially want children to have positive experiences in the library. Children left unattended in the library may become frightened or anxious. An unattended child may wander through the building and encounter hazards such as stairs, electrical equipment, doors, or furniture. An unattended child might be tempted to leave the building with a stranger. An unattended child could get mixed in with a school group and become lost. An unattended child could become ill. Emergency situations can occur in public buildings, requiring evacuation. An unattended child could panic and become lost in the building. It is for the safety of each child that the Bryan + College Station Public Library System has adopted this Safe Children Policy. Parents and caregivers are expected to ensure a pleasant and safe experience for the children in their care by abiding by this policy.

For the purpose of this policy, responsible caregiver is defined as the person who accompanies a child to the library and attends to the child while in the library. Responsible caregivers may be a parent, guardian, adult relative, teacher, day care staff, adult baby sitter, or sibling at least age 16. The responsible caregiver must have information to be able to contact a parent or guardian if needed.

Children under age 9 must have a responsible caregiver within sight and conversation distance at all times. The caregiver is expected to supervise the child and ensure that the child's behavior is not disturbing to other library customers. A child, age 3 – 8, who is attending a library sponsored program may be left unattended during the program, but the child's caregiver must be present in the library, and readily accessible if staff should require assistance with the child.

Children ages 9 – 11 must have a caregiver present in the library during the entire time that they are using library resources. The caregiver must be readily accessible if staff should require assistance with the child. The caregiver should clearly inform the child about his/her location in the library before leaving the child alone.

Children ages 12 and older may be present in the library unaccompanied by a responsible caregiver. The child must have information to be able to contact a parent or guardian if needed. Unaccompanied children who disturb other library customers or become otherwise disruptive may be asked to leave the library if their behavior is not acceptable after a reasonable warning.