

## Unattended Children Policy

The Alvarado Public Library wants children to use its facilities and service and is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for patrons of all ages. The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern of the library staff. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with the library staff. Library staff cannot be responsible for children who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior. **Parents who leave their children unattended at the Library are exposing their children to potential harm and may be committing an offense under the Texas Penal Code, Section 22.041c: Endangering a Child.** The purpose of this policy is to encourage parents/caregivers to exercise reasonable care, supervision and control over their minor children.

### Our Policy States:

- Children under the age of ten (10) may not be left unattended at any time and should be closely watched at all times by an adult parent, or guardian aged 17 or older, and must carry emergency contact information. [An exception would be children, ages six (6) and older, who are attending a library program without a parent/caregiver in the room. However, the parent/caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.]
- Parents/Guardians will **not** sit down at the computer or walk off to look for books while their child or children under the age of seven (7) roam around the library unattended by another adult parent or guardian.
- Children between the ages of ten (10) and fourteen (14) **will not** be left unattended at the library for more than two hours **or** at closing time and the library, library staff, library volunteers or contracted employees shall not be held responsible for anything that might happen to the child or children during the time they are at the library.
- Since there may be times when the library may need to close early, or close for a certain period of time, **before you leave your child at the library you must call us or come inside the building and ask if the library will be open during the normal operating hours for that day.**
- **Our telephone may not be used for children or adult patrons to make or receive calls or messages;** however in an emergency situation **we** will call parents/guardians about, or on behalf of, their child. We will attempt to call the contact numbers you will provide for us when you receive a library card or when you obtain one for your child. It is extremely important that those contact numbers be kept up-to-date in our computer system.
- If the library suffers a power outage or has to close due to an emergency we will attempt to call you to come and pick-up your child who is under the age of fifteen (15).  
If we are unable to reach you, appropriate law enforcement or child protective authorities will be notified to take custody of the child who is under the age of (15) fifteen.  
In accordance with our policy, children aged fifteen (15) or older will be asked to leave the building.
- Children are **not** allowed to run inside the building or outside on the sidewalk or parking lot, become loud and disruptive, use vulgar or inappropriate language, damage library property, insult the library staff or interfere with the use of the library by other customers.  
Should this happen, we will attempt to call their parent/guardian. If we are unable to reach a parent/guardian, appropriate law enforcement or child protective authorities will be notified to take custody of any child under the age of fifteen (15).  
In accordance with our policy, children aged fifteen (15) or older will be asked to leave the building.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_