

Safe Children Policy

High Point Public Library and High Point Historical Museum

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The High Point Public Library and High Point Historical Museum welcome children of all ages. Children are important and deserve attention, supervision, positive interaction and love. We are dedicated to providing materials, services and programs for the benefit of children in our community in a welcoming, fun, and safe environment.

The safety of children in the library and the museum is a serious concern to staff and the Library Board of Trustees. The library and the museum are public buildings and as such, anyone can enter them. Staff have many duties to perform in order to serve all customers, and cannot monitor the whereabouts of customers, including children. Staff cannot assume responsibility for the care and safety of unattended children in the library or museum. Parents and responsible caregivers are expected to provide supervision for children in the library and museum. Children in the library and museum are expected to follow the same rules and regulations as all other library and museum customers.

We especially want children to have positive experiences in our facilities, and children left unattended may become frightened or anxious or may wander through the buildings, encountering hazards such as stairs, electrical equipment, doors, or furniture. An unattended child might be tempted to leave the building with a stranger or 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 this Safe Children Policy has been adopted. 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 or museum and attends to the child while there. A responsible caregiver 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.

POLICY:

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 others.

Children ages 9 – 11 must have a responsible caregiver present in the library/museum during the entire time that they are using resources. The caregiver must be readily accessible if staff should

require assistance with the child. The responsible caregiver should clearly inform the child about his/her location in the library or museum before leaving the child alone.

Children ages 12 and older may be present in the library or museum 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 or museum customers or become otherwise disruptive may be asked to leave the library or museum if their behavior is not acceptable after reasonable warning.

Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children in the library and museum, whether or not the parent is present.

When a child is unattended or under-attended/ignored and:

- the behavior of the child is disruptive or inappropriate (or)
- the child appears to be a danger to herself or himself or others (or)
- the child appears to be threatened by others (or)
- the child appears to be ill or upset (or)
- the child has not been met by a parent or caregiver at closing,

Library staff will attempt to contact the parent or guardian of the child. In the event that the parent or guardian cannot be located, staff or security will contact the High Point Police Department. In the event of an emergency, staff will call 911.

The Library Director and staff are authorized by the Board of Trustees to develop procedures to carry out this Safe Children Policy.

Adopted by Library Board of Trustees March 21, 2012