Caldwell County
NORTH CAROLINA
Public Library

CALDWELL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SAFE CHILD POLICY

The Caldwell County Public Library welcomes children of all ages to use our materials and services. The library is, however, a public building and library staff members have many duties to perform to serve all the citizens of Caldwell County. They cannot monitor the behavior, safety or whereabouts of people using the library. The Caldwell County Public Library cannot provide daycare or supervision for unattended children.

The library cannot assume responsibility for minors, nor do we assume responsibility for children left at any of the library locations at closing time. To help ensure that a child will have a pleasant and safe experience while visiting the library, a child 6 years of age or younger is to be in the immediate presence of a parent or other *responsible* caretaker, 16 years of age or older, during the entire stay in the library or on library grounds. Children 7-11 years of age must have a parent or caregiver within the library building. This parent or caretaker is responsible for the behavior of the child(ren) in his/her care while in the library. Children are subject to the same rules of behavior as all other library patrons.

Parents are responsible for the conduct of their minor child(ren) (under 18) in the library or on library grounds, regardless of whether or not they accompany the child(ren). Parents are responsible for making sure that unaccompanied minors have a ride home at closing time. When a child is left unaccompanied in violation of policy or if a child is habitually disruptive, as outlined in the Library's Patron Code of Conduct, the parent will be called to pick up the child. An incident report will also be filed with the Library Director. Consequences of violations of policy will be determined by the professional library staff. Possible consequences include being asked to leave the library or being banned from the library system for a specified length of time. Appeals may be made to the Library Board of Trustees.

Unattended Children at Closing

When staff observe unattended juveniles on library premises 15 minutes before closing, they should encourage the children to be sure that transportation has been arranged.

When a child/minor under the age of 16 is left unattended after the library has closed, staff should contact his/her parents or guardian. Two staff members will wait with the child for 15 minutes. (Compensatory time shall be granted to any library staff member who stays after normal closing time with unattended children.) Staff members are not permitted to offer transportation to minors left at closing. If the child/minor is still on the premises 15 minutes after closing, the staff member will call the local police and explain the situation. The staff member should record the child's name, parent's name, address and phone number. The staff member will remain with the child until the police arrive.

A notice will be posted at the main entrance to the library informing anyone looking for the

child that he/she has been placed in the care of the local police. The staff member in charge should file an incident report. If the contact information is available, the Library Director will send the parents or guardians a letter explaining our policies and procedures regarding minors.

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