

# Siuslaw Public Library District

## Child Safety Policy

The Siuslaw Public Library District welcomes children and families. To make the Library an enjoyable place and to encourage a love of books, reading, and learning, we offer a designated Children's area and Teen area along with programs, services and materials for children and teens. We hope caregivers and guardians will help children make effective use of the Library and assist them in selecting books and materials, using the computers, or attending programs. Young patrons should have a fun and positive experience when visiting the Siuslaw Public Library District.

### **Parent Expectations and Responsibilities**

Because the Library is a public place, children's safety cannot be guaranteed. Children may encounter hazards such as stairs, doors, furniture, electrical equipment, or other Library patrons. The conduct, safety, and supervision of children while on Library premises is solely the responsibility of parents, guardians, and caregivers (hereinafter referred to as guardians). Appropriate supervision provided by parents, guardians, and caregivers will assist Library staff in creating a pleasant and safe environment for patrons of all ages.

### **Access to Children's/Teen Areas**

The Children's and Teen areas of the Library are specifically designed to serve the needs of young customers. When staff observe adults in that area not using materials or not using the area for the purpose intended will be asked to use other areas of the Library. However, staff may not always observe such activity.

### **Staff Role and Unattended Children**

The Siuslaw Public Library staff invite children to use the library and hope that they perceive it as a warm, inviting and fun place to be. The services provided and many programs offered are aimed at encouraging children to develop a love of books, reading and libraries.

Library staff cannot serve as caregivers. The staff is unable to determine if children are leaving the building with parents or a stranger. In addition, they cannot monitor children's activities outside the building on the grounds, in the parking lot or on the street.

For the protection and well-being of children who enjoy our library, the following policy has been established:

- Children age five (5) and younger must stay with and be supervised by a responsible caregiver in the library (including the restroom area) at all times.
- Caregivers of children between the ages of 6-9 are strongly encouraged to remain in the library.
- The library does not consider chaperones under the age of 16 to be responsible caregivers
- Persons responsible for children who have special needs related to physical or mental ability, disruptive behavior, emotional problems, lack of adequate attention span, or incomplete social skills, shall remain with their children at all times.
- Adults who bring their children with them when attending meetings in the library must make arrangements for supervision of their children.
- Parents or caregivers, not the library staff, are responsible for the behavior, safety and supervision of their children when using the library.

If staff members are concerned about the safety of a child or teen patron:

- a. Staff will try to locate the child's parent, guardian, or caregiver in the Library and express the Library's concern for the child's safety, and explain the Library's Child Safety Policy. If staff is unable to locate the parent, guardian, or caregiver in the Library, staff will make a concerted effort to contact the parent, guardian or caregiver to pick up the child. Staff will express the Library's concern for the child's safety and explain the Library's Child Safety Policy. If the parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be located within a reasonable time, staff will call the Florence Police Department if in Florence, or the Lane County Sheriff's Office if in Mapleton.
- b. Staff will encourage any unattended child to contact his or her parent, guardian, or caregiver before closing time. If a parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be reached or does not arrive within a reasonable

time after closing, Library staff will call the Florence Police Department/Lane County Sheriff's Department to pick up the child. These same actions will be followed for emergency closures. Two staff members will remain with the child until the parent, guardian, caregiver or police arrive. Once the child is in the protective care of the Florence Police Department/Lane County Sheriff's Department, a note will be attached to the Library entrance or entrances, with the following information: "Unattended child is in the care of the Florence Police Department/Lane County Sheriff's Department." Neither the name of the child nor the name of the parent, guardian, or caregiver will be listed on the note.

- c. Staff will not transport any child from the Library to another location.

### **Library Programs for Children and Teens**

The Library provides a number of programs specifically for children and teen, as well as programs for families. Programs for youth are almost exclusively held during library open hours, and the same guidelines about supervision apply as are outlined in the rest of this policy. Caregivers should be aware of when programs end, and may be contacted prior to a program's end if their child needs assistance or is not feeling well.

From time to time, teen programs may be offered when the Library is not open to the general public. This is a special opportunity for responsible, interested teens to make use of the Library space and resources. In these instances, at least two staff members will be present throughout the event. Additional information will be made available to anyone who asks using the sample form below.

## SAMPLE TEEN PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET

*This informational sheet will tell you what you and your teen can expect at this special after hours library program just for our teen patrons.*

Title of Program: Teen Summer Reading Grand Finale Lock-In

Date, Hours, and Location of Program:

Intended Audience:

Description of Program:

Staff Members Present:

Other Adults Present:

Anything Teens Should Bring to the Program:

Special Rules and Guidelines for the Event:

Contact Information for Staff Member Supervising Program: