

### 1.0 Purpose:

The Nederland Community Library strives to create a safe environment for all its patrons; its safe child guidelines are meant to provide parents and caregivers with the information they need to make informed choices for their children's safety.

### 2.0 Definition:

Unattended children are children 17 and younger who are unaccompanied by a parent, guardian, and/or caregiver in the library.

### 3.0 Policy:

The Nederland Community Library welcomes and encourages children to visit the library, use library resources and services, and attend library programs. Library staff are available to assist and support children with their use of library resources and to provide a welcoming environment. However, neither the library nor its staff members act in place of parents and library staff are not responsible for children who are left unattended on library premises. Parents, guardians and/or caregivers are responsible for the safety, behavior, and supervision of their children at all times in the Nederland Community Library and on library property, whether or not they are present. The library respects the privacy of all patrons and will intervene only when a child is believed to be at risk, disturbing other patrons, or is endangering him or herself or others.

Nederland Community Library complies with state and federal law mandating the use of filtering software in public libraries. The library provides four designated computers for use by children; two provide internet access with filtering capabilities; two provide self contained, secure, early learning software with no access to the internet.

The library can not guarantee that our filtering capabilities will protect against access to materials that some may find harmful to minors. Parents, guardians or caregivers of minors are responsible for their children's use of the internet.

- Children, 9 and older, may use the library unattended; children under 9 must be accompanied by an adult 18 or older, unless specifically registered for a drop-off program or they are with a caregiver between the ages of 14 and 17, for whom the parent has signed a consent form waiving any library responsibility for the child when with the 14 to 17 year-old caregiver. Consent forms must be reviewed by the Library Director and renewed every year.

- The library staff cannot provide childcare or assume parental responsibility for children's safety.

- All children, like all library users, are expected to behave in a manner that respects library property and that is appropriate to the use and function of the library.

- If a child behaves in a disruptive manner, the child may be asked to correct their behavior. Library staff may, at their discretion, contact a parent, guardian, and/or caregiver, or direct the child to leave the library.
- When an unattended child has not been picked up at close of library business, the child has a health emergency, appears to be lost, is being disruptive, or if in the judgment of staff, his or her safety is jeopardized, library staff will make an attempt to contact an appropriate adult.
- If parents, guardians, and/or caregivers cannot be reached within thirty minutes, the library staff may notify appropriate law enforcement or child protective authorities and place the child in their protective custody.

**4.0 Attachments:** N/A

**5.0 Revision History:** Rev -0- Initial Issue; Rev-1-December 6, 2018; Rev-2-June 29-2022

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