

HARLINGEN PUBLIC LIBRARY  
CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT POLICY

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DOCUMENTATION INFORMATION:

Proposed by Dauna Campbell, Library Director 6/5/17

Adopted by Harlingen Public Library Board 6/5/17

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Sec. 1 **CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT POLICY**

Purpose

- (1) The Children's Department is dedicated to delivering excellent library service to children and their families. Clear guidelines for children and their caregivers will ensure that everyone is able to experience the library as an engaging, enriching, and safe place.
- (2) The Harlingen Public Library cannot assume the responsibility of children. Responsibility for the safety, care, and behavior of every child using the library rests with the parent, guardian, or caregiver, not library staff.

Sec. 2 **UNATTENDED CHILDREN**

- (1) Children under the age of 10 must be supervised by a responsible caregiver who is at least 16 years old.
- (2) If library staff become aware that a child under the age of 10 is left at the library unattended,
  - A. A library staff member will attempt to contact the child's parent, guardian, or caregiver to either pick up the child or come to the library to provide appropriate supervision.
  - B. If a parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be reached, a library staff member will contact law enforcement who will assume responsibility for the child.
  - C. If a parent, guardian, or caregiver is reached, but then fails to assume responsibility of the child within 30 minutes, a library staff member will contact law enforcement who will assume responsibility for the child.
- (3) If a child under the age of 18 is left alone at the library at closing, or if the library closes because of an emergency situation, a library staff member will attempt to contact the child's parent, guardian, or caregiver. If a parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be reached, a library staff member will call law enforcement who will assume responsibility for the child.

Sec. 3 **DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN**

The Children's Department encourages exploration, collaboration, and creativity. However, disruptive behavior is not tolerated by any library patron.

- (1) Disruptive behavior is defined as follows:
  - A. Behavior that disturbs or endangers the well-being of library patrons, staff, or the child herself;
  - B. Behavior that results in damaged property; and
  - C. Behavior that interferes with library services.
- (2) If a child displays disruptive behavior,
  - A. A library staff member may attempt to redirect the child.
  - B. A library staff member may warn the child and caregiver that the behavior is unacceptable and may result in them being asked to leave.
  - C. A library staff member may ask the child and his caregiver to leave.

Sec. 4 **ADULTS IN THE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT**

All adults who visit the Children's Department must be actively caring for a child or using the Children's Department resources for the benefit of children. If an adult is in the Children's Department with no related reason, a library staff member will ask the person to move to another area of the library or to leave the library.

Sec. 5 **CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT COMPUTERS**

- (1) Children's Department computers are designated for children's use. Adults supervising a child may use a computer if one is available, but children have priority use.

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- (2) As with other library materials, monitoring of a child's access to the Internet is the responsibility of the parent, guardian, or caregiver of the child.
- (3) All the guidelines listed in the Acceptable Computer and Internet Policy apply to Children's Department computer users.
- (4) The library reserves the right to end a computer session at any time, for any reason. Violation of the Acceptable Computer and Internet Policy or the Children's Department Computer Policy may result in the loss of access to library computer resources.