

## **UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY**

*Adopted February 19, 2020*



The North Douglas Library District's Mildred Whipple Library encourages children of all ages to visit the library and hopes they will find it a warm, inviting place to be. Programs and resources are offered to make the library enticing to children, to help children and entire families enjoy their visits, and to develop a love of books, reading and libraries.

The happiness and safety of children left alone at the library can be of serious concern. Young children left on their own in the library often become frightened or anxious. Young children are not safe when left unattended in the library. The staff cannot know if the children are leaving the building with parents or with strangers. It is not the library's intention to seek out unattended children, but rather to have a reasoned response prepared when a problem presents itself. For the protection and well-being of children who visit the library, the following policy has been established.

### **Unattended Child When the Library is Open**

#### *Children under 12*

Children under the age of 12 may not be left unattended by an adult or responsible teen in any part of the Library. If children under the age of 12 are found without an adult or responsible teen, staff will attempt to locate the parent or other caregiver. If no such person can be located, staff is directed to call the Douglas County Sheriff office, where a determination will be made about whether to call Child Protective Services.

Programs - During story times or other programs, adults who do not attend the program with the child must remain in the building and must be visible when the program is over.

#### *Children 12 years and older*

Children 12 and over are old enough to use the library responsibly. If problems arise, they may be asked to leave or parents may be contacted. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to be accessible to pick up the child at any time. The child must have a way for library staff to contact a parent or caregiver.

No child younger than 16 may be unattended in the library one half hour before library closing. Should a child 15 years or younger be unattended one half hour (30 minutes) before the library closes, staff will attempt to contact a parent or caregiver. If no such person can be reached, staff will contact the Douglas County Sheriff office.

## *North Douglas Library District*

### **Unattended Youth During Emergency Closings**

The Mildred Whipple Library will close due to emergencies because of inclement weather, power outages, etc. If the North Douglas Schools close because of inclement weather the Library may also close. No child may be sent to the library if the schools close early due to emergencies.

Please remember if your child is 12 years to 15 years old and is left unattended at the library, staff must have a way to contact a parent or caregiver at all. A parent or caregiver must have definite arrangements to pick up the child before closing time.

Thirty (30) minutes before closing the library on any normal day or in an emergency, an adult staff member will call the parent or caregiver to verify that the child will be picked up before closing. If a parent or caregiver cannot be reached after trying for 15 minutes, the sheriff department will be asked if they can assist the staff in helping to get the child home safely.

Neither staff, board members, nor volunteers will drive children home.