

UNATTENDED / DISRUPTIVE CHILD POLICY

Villa Rica Public Library * 869 Dallas Hwy. Villa Rica, GA 30180 * 770.459.7012

PURPOSE: *The purpose of this policy is to establish Villa Rica Public Library as a family friendly facility that places value on its young patrons and offers them the same pledge of a clean, quiet environment for browsing, reading, computer use and attending programs. However, the safety and well-being of children at the library is of serious concern. It is the intention of this policy to enlist the cooperation of parents and other adults responsible for children to ensure that the Villa Rica Public Library provides a safe and pleasant experience for all who use it.*

POLICY: *Since the library is a public facility and is frequented by patrons of all ages and backgrounds, it becomes the parents and/or caregivers responsibility to monitor the whereabouts and behavior of their child/children at all times. The library staff cannot be held responsible for the safety of a child who may be enticed/coerced to leave with someone other than his/her parents and/or caregivers. As it is for adults, violations of library's Code of Conduct are grounds for suspension of library privileges. Whenever advisable, the Library will notify the parent/caregiver of incidents involving an unattended or disruptive child.*

Unattended Children

Children aged 10 and under must be accompanied by a parent and/or caregiver (age 16 or older) who is in the immediate vicinity and in visual contact with the child at all times in the library. Supervision of child by parent or caregiver is required in the Children's Library known as the Kid's Spot at all times.

If a child in this age group is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library and inform him/her of the rules. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, the police will be called for assistance to locate the child's parent/caregiver.

Children's Programming at the library requires a parent to stay with children aged 10 and under.

Children age 11 and older may use the library on their own. However, parents are still responsible for the actions and the well-being of their child or children. Though staff will always respond with care and concern, they cannot assume responsibility for children's safety and comfort when they are unattended. Staff may need to contact authorities such as the police either to assist with the enforcement of discipline in the library or to ensure the safety of an unattended child.

For safety's sake, parents should make sure that their children are sufficiently mature before allowing them to visit the Library by themselves. Parents should also realize that, even in their absence, they are legally responsible for their children's behavior.

The Library is not responsible for the care and supervision of unaccompanied children prior to opening or after closing. The Library is also not responsible for children outside the building who await transportation or who are socializing. Adults responsible for unattended school-age children using the Library should be aware of the Library's hours and make arrangements to meet the children on time.

This is a particular concern in inclement weather and after dark. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency. When the safety of an unattended child is in doubt, or the parent or responsible caregiver cannot be located, or if the Library is closing, library staff is authorized to call the police and stay with the child until the police arrive.

Teenagers are treated as adult users. However, they are still legally the responsibility of their guardians and should have an emergency contact available.

