Bogota Public Library: Policy on Unattended Children

Bogota Public Library desires to provide a comfortable, safe and welcoming environment for children of all ages. The Library, as a public building, has staff trained to provide public library services, including programs and resources offered to make the Library enticing to children and to help children develop a love of books, reading and libraries. The staff urges parents/guardians to remember that the Library staff is not equipped to provide childcare and it is not in any child's best interest to be left unattended. 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. The Library has implemented the following policy for the safety of all children visiting the Library.

A parent/guardian, responsible caregiver, or older sibling (ages 12 or over) must accompany children under the age of 9 years old for their safety and comfort while using the Library. **Children, like all library patrons, are expected to behave appropriately and to follow the Library Code of Conduct.** Parents/guardians and responsible caregivers, not library staff, are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children in the Library. Library staff cannot assume responsibility for the care, safety or well-being of children in the Library.

Unattended Children under 12-Years-Old:

Children under the age of 12 may not be left unattended in any part of the Library without a parent/guardian or responsible caregiver. If children under the age of 12 are found without a parent/guardian, responsible caregiver or a responsible older sibling, library staff will:

1. Make every reasonable effort to locate the parent/guardian or responsible caregiver.
2. Once located, library staff will ensure they are made aware of the Library's policy on unattended children as well as the consequences if the child is left alone in the Library again.
3. If notifying the parents/guardians of this policy does not solve the issue, the Library may take additional steps outlined in the Library Code of Conduct such as revoking library privileges, etc. (See Code of Conduct).

Unattended Children 12-Years-Old or Older:

The above procedure may also be applied in the following situations involving unattended children 12-years-old or older if:

- the unattended child is found frightened or crying in the Library.
- the unattended child is perceived to be endangering him or herself, or another person in the Library poses a perceived threat to the unattended child.
- the unattended child has not been met by a parent or responsible caregiver at closing time
- the unattended child exhibits inappropriate behavior or fails to comply with the Library's code of conduct.

At any time, if library staff suspect neglect or endangerment, police will be notified immediately.

NJSA 9:6-8.21 prohibits parents from endangering the welfare of children.
NJSA 30:5B-l-l 5 prohibits the Library from functioning as a childcare center unless licensed by the State of New Jersey.

Adopted by the Bogota Public Library Board of Trustees: September 12, 2016
Revised: September 12, 2022