

**SPRINGDALE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**Policies and Procedures**

**Children’s Use of the Library**

<b>Affects:</b> All Functions	<b>Effective Date:</b> May 8, 1996 R:February 26, 2013 R: August 14, 2023	<b>Review Date:</b> January 16, 2024	<b>Number</b>
<b>Signature:</b> <b>Name:</b> <b>Title:</b> Board President			

**A. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to define children’s use of the library. Parents are encouraged to register children for library cards at an early age. Parents are responsible for their children’s use and selection of library materials. Programs, activities, and services are planned for children from birth through young adulthood.

**B. Policy**

**Age Requirements**

There is no age requirement for obtaining a library card. Parents of minors (under 18 years of age) are required to sign a statement of responsibility for the child’s use of the library and for the use of all materials.

Children fifteen years and older may visit the library unaccompanied by an adult.

Children under the age of thirteen must always be supervised by an adult, in all areas of the library. A parent or adult caregiver of children ages thirteen and fourteen must be available in the library building.

Parents will be called to pick up a child who is left unattended at the library. If the parent cannot be reached, a letter may be sent informing the parents of this policy for future reference. Law enforcement may be called to assist with unattended children in an emergency. Library staff cannot act in the place of a parent.

**Appropriate Conduct for Children**

All patrons, regardless of age, are expected to follow the rules of conduct set out in the **Patron Conduct Policy**. Children may require additional consideration, but should not be held to a higher standard of conduct than is expected of adults. The Children’s service and programming areas are separated from the adult areas of the library, allowing for greater latitude in noise and activity levels.

## **Inappropriate or Disruptive Behavior**

Parents of young children who are disruptive may be asked by staff to modify the situation so that the child's behavior is less annoying to others.

Older children whose library needs have been met and who are disruptive may be asked to leave the library for the day.

## **Child Safety in the Library**

All children are safest when under the supervision of a parent or adult caregiver.

Adults should closely monitor children near all entrance and exit doors to avoid injury and to prevent the child from leaving the building unsupervised. Children should never be allowed to play or remain near the automated front doors.

Other doors to the outside have push-bar openers for emergency exit only. Children attempting to open or leaning against the emergency exit bars can set off a loud alarm installed on these doors. Some children may be able to open these doors and leave the building.

The parent or caretaker is responsible for close supervision of children in all restrooms. The restrooms in the Children's Area are specially designed for the use of children and their caretakers. Other adults are discouraged from using these restrooms, but parents should always be vigilant.

## **C. Applicability**

If the child cannot safely leave the library to return home on his or her own, staff will encourage the child to call a parent. If no parent can be contacted, staff will either allow the child to remain at the library under close supervision until a parent can be contacted or contact the proper authorities, depending upon the severity of the situation.

Children who are in the library near closing time will be encouraged to call a parent. Two staff members will remain with any children left at closing time, helping them locate a parent or family member. Parents will be reminded of the library's hours and of their responsibility for picking their children up on time. Habitual episodes of this type may result in loss of privileges.

## **Responsibility**

Responsibility is with the Library Director and the Children's Services Coordinator

## **C. Appendices**

### **ALA Free Access to Libraries for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**