

INDIAN RIVER AREA LIBRARY

Children and Vulnerable Adults in the Library Policy

1. STATEMENT of PURPOSE

Children and vulnerable adults are welcome and encouraged to use the *Indian River Area Library* (“IRAL”) at all times. The Library desires to make each visit an important one. The IRAL Board of Trustees adopts the following policy with regard to children and vulnerable adults at the Library.

2. DEFINITIONS

- A. “*Child*” means a minor under the age of 18.
- B. “*Vulnerable Adult*” means an individual age 18 or over who, because of developmental disability, mental illness, physical disability or other similar reason (1) requires supervision or personal care or (2) lacks the personal and social skills required to live independently.
- C. “*Responsible Caregiver*” is an individual who is responsible for monitoring or caring for a child or vulnerable adult and who must be at least 13 years old.

3. RULES and REGULATIONS REGARDING CHILDREN

- A. All patrons, including children, are expected to comply with IRAL’s policies, including its **Code of Conduct Policy**. Parents, guardians, or responsible caregivers shall review and be fully aware of all Library policies governing children, particularly the **Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy**.
- B. Parents, guardians, and Responsible Caregivers are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children regardless of age while in the Library. This includes, but is not limited to, preventing children from running, climbing, yelling or screaming, throwing things, or other disruptive behavior and working with children on the computers.
- C. Library staff will not be expected to supervise or monitor children’s behavior.
- D. Children 10 year of age and under must be in the same room or area of the Library as a parent, guardian, or Responsible Caregiver. The parent, guardian, or Responsible Caregiver shall remain in the Library at all times. If a child under the age of 10 is attending a Library-sponsored program, a parent, guardian, or Responsible Caregiver is to remain on the premises for the duration of the program.
- E. Children of any age who, because of developmental disability, mental illness, physical disability, or other similar reason, requires supervision or personal care shall be attended by a parent, guardian, or Responsible Caregiver at all times.
- F. Children ages 7 and under must be within visual contact of a parent, guardian, or Responsible Caregiver at all times, including during programs and visits to the restroom. Children 7 and under may not be left alone in the Makerspace Room or Children’s Area.

4. UNATTENDED CHILDREN in the LIBRARY

- A. Staff will not be responsible if unattended children of any age leave the Library premises alone or with other persons. Further, staff will not be responsible for children who may be asked to leave the Library if the child is in violation of Library policy.
- B. IRAL requests that unattended children be picked up at least ten minutes before closing time. Parents, guardians, and Responsible Caregivers need to be aware of when the Library closes.
- C. Children 11 years or older must know their telephone number and other contact information if they are unattended at the Library. It is a violation of Library policy not to come immediately and pick up your unattended child if the Library calls.

5. RULES and REGULATIONS REGARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

- A. All patrons, including vulnerable adults, are expected to comply with the Library's policies, including its **Code of Conduct Policy**. Parents, guardians, or Responsible Caregivers shall review and be fully aware of all IRAL policies, particularly the **Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy**.
- B. Parents, guardians, and Responsible Caregivers are responsible for the behavior and supervision of the vulnerable adult in their care while in the Library or on IRAL property.
- C. Vulnerable adults who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves or who do not have the ability to use the Library independently may not be left alone in the Library and must have adequate supervision while in the Library.
- D. Vulnerable adults who can understand and follow the **Code of Conduct Policy** and who can care for themselves are allowed to be in the Library unattended. They should have contact information for someone who can assist them in an emergency.
- E. IRAL requests that all vulnerable adults be picked up at least ten minutes before closing time. Parents, guardians, and Responsible Caregivers need to be aware of when the Library closes.
- F. Vulnerable adults must know their telephone number and other contact information if they are unattended at the Library. It is a violation of Library policy not to come immediately and pick up your vulnerable adult if the Library calls.

6. UNSAFE CONDITIONS

- A. A parent, guardian, or Responsible Caregiver who feels the child or vulnerable adult in their protection is either in an unsafe situation or has been inappropriately contacted by a stranger should report this to Library staff as soon as possible.
- B. The Library is not responsible for unreported events.
- C. Staff will take appropriate actions to ensure the safety of the child. The incident may be referred to the police. The safety of the Library users and staff is always the primary consideration.

7. CONTACT with PARENT or GUARDIAN for UNATTENDED CHILD or VULNERABLE ADULT

- A. Library staff will attempt to contact a parent, legal guardian, or Responsible Caregiver when:
 - a. The health or safety of an unattended child or vulnerable adult is in doubt;
 - b. A child or vulnerable adult is frightened while alone at the Library;
 - c. The behavior of an unattended child or vulnerable adult violates Library policy;

- d. The unattended child or vulnerable adult has not been met by a parent, legal guardian, custodian or Responsible Caregiver at closing time. An individual is considered an unattended vulnerable adult when they are not picked up by closing time and needs assistance procuring transportation. A child is considered unattended at closing time if the child is under the age of 14 or a child of any age needs assistance procuring transportation.
- B. If a parent, legal guardian, or Responsible Caregiver cannot be reached within 15 minutes after closing or fails to arrive within a reasonable time after being contacted, Library staff will contact law enforcement officials to take charge of the situation involving the unattended child or vulnerable adult. Library employees are not permitted to transport an unattended child or vulnerable adult under any circumstances.
- C. If the parent, legal guardian, or Responsible Caregiver can be reached within 15 minutes after closing and arrives in a reasonable time, the staff member shall explain the Library's policy and provide a copy of this policy.
- D. One Library staff member (two staff members when available) shall remain with the unattended child or vulnerable adult until the Responsible Caregiver or law enforcement arrive.