

## **Children Visiting the Library**

Reviewed and Approved by the Board of Trustees, March 8, 2021

We are glad your children are here! We want the Frankfort Community Public Library and the branch libraries in Michigantown, Mulberry and Rossville to be welcoming, educational, and safe places for your child.

**The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the Library rests with the parents, legal guardians, or other responsible caregivers.** Caregivers must have maturity and understand their responsibility. A 13 year-old is generally considered to be capable of caring for a younger child. Sharing the library environment with other people requires that all follow the Library Rules established by the Board of Trustees. Children must carry the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency. Library staff strives to ensure that all buildings are operated in a safe manner. However, because the buildings are open to all, libraries cannot be considered safe places for unattended children.

Children under 8 years old must have a parent/caregiver in the immediate vicinity of the child. An exception would be children attending a library program without a parent/caregiver in the room, but they must remain in the library building, and must immediately join the child at the end of the program.

When a child, under age 8, is unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library and inform him/her of the Policy for Children Visiting the Library. If the parent or caregiver cannot be found, the child will be placed in the care of law enforcement or child protection services.

Children 8-12 may use the library on their own. However, parents are still responsible for the actions of their child(ren). If a child is not able to leave the library without an adult, he/she should not be in the library without an adult.

Young people 13-17 are treated as adult patrons. However, they are still the legal responsibility of their parents.

The procedure for dealing with unattended children under the age of 8 (outlined above) may also apply to any:

- child that has not been picked up within 10 minutes after closing
- child that has become ill or frightened
- child that is vulnerable because of circumstances such as weather conditions, inadequate meal arrangements or long hours out of contact with the parent/caregiver
- child that has become disruptive and has not responded to verbal warnings issued by the library staff.

Parents who continue to disregard library policy regarding this matter may be reported to the appropriate social services agency and/or may lose all library privileges.

The library staff respects the privacy of all library patrons and will intervene only when, in the opinion of the library staff, the safety and well being of a child is threatened.

Under no circumstances will a staff member give the child a ride home, take the child outside the building, or offer the child a seat in his/her vehicle.