

Policy Adopted October 10, 2008
Revised: 3/6/15

WESTERN PLAINS LIBRARY SYSTEM

Children in the Library Policy

WPLS is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for customers of all ages. Sharing this environment with other people requires that everyone follow the *Rules of Customer Conduct Policy* established by the WPLS Board of Trustees and available on the library website.

WPLS wants children to use its facilities and services. This policy is meant to ensure a safe and positive environment for children, as well as to ensure that their use does not interfere with the use of library services by other library users.

Children in the Library

WPLS is not responsible for children who are unattended or are demonstrating inappropriate behavior. Responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of children using the library rests with the parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver. Neither WPLS nor any staff member acts in loco parentis.

Library staff

Staff should always respond with care and concern for the well-being of children, and should never yell at, touch, or pick up a child. Under no circumstances should a librarian offer an unattended child a ride home. If a staff is concerned with the safety of a child without a ride, law enforcement should be contacted. Library staff who suspects child abuse should discuss the issue with their immediate supervisor.

Preschool children

Preschool children should be in sight of and supervised by a parent/caregiver at all times. A responsible caregiver must be at least thirteen years old. When preschool children are left alone, they may become frightened or anxious. If they wander through the building they may encounter hazards such as stairs, doors, furniture, shelving, or electrical equipment. They may also become bored and restless and could disturb the enjoyment of others.

Children up to age 7

Non preschool children up to age 7 must have a parent or caregiver within the immediate vicinity of the library unless they are participating in a library program. A caregiver must be at least thirteen years old. Parents or caregivers who do not attend programs are still responsible for their children and must remain in the library during the program.

Children ages 8-17

Children ages 8-17 may use the library unattended as long as they do not interrupt the library environment

Misbehaving Children

If staff determine that a child is disrupting the library the child and any caregivers present will be notified of the behavior and informed of library rules. If the behavior continues the child and caregiver may be asked to leave the library for the day. Serious or repeated conduct may lead to restrictions, including loss of library privileges up to one year and/or appropriate legal action, at the discretion of the WPLS Executive Director.

If a child age 8 or older (without a caregiver present) is expelled from the library for behavioral reasons, staff may attempt to notify a caregiver so that the child may be picked up. If a caregiver is coming to pick up a child who been asked to leave the library, the child must wait outside the library except for instances of inclement weather.

Unattended Children

When a child under 8 years old is found unattended, library staff should make a reasonable effort to find and notify the child's caregiver. If the caregiver cannot be found, staff will contact law enforcement to pick up the child. Staff cannot remain after closing to wait for caregivers to pick up children. If a staff member is concerned about the safety of a child, law enforcement should be contacted.