

## SERVICE TO CHILDREN POLICY

### **PURPOSE:**

The Albany Public Library welcomes and encourages children to visit the Library, to use Library resources and services, and to attend Library programs. Library staff members are available to help and support children and to make their library experience a rewarding and positive one.

### **POLICY:**

#### **Unattended Children**

The Library does not provide care or supervision of children, except to the extent needed to uphold Library rules of conduct and use. The Library does not accept responsibility for care or supervision of children who are not accompanied by an adult or designated caregiver. The Library is not able to provide short- or long-term childcare and is not a substitute for supervised after-school or daycare programs. Parents or designated caregivers are solely responsible for their children's supervision and behavior while using the Library.

The Albany Public Library has developed the following guidelines for the safety and protection of children using the Library:

**Children Age 8 or younger must be accompanied by an adult or responsible adolescent (age 14 and older).** The designated caregiver must stay with children at all times. If children are participating in a story time or other Library program, the designated caregiver must remain on Library premises and be in visual and/or voice contact with the children. If a child age 8 or under is found to be unattended in the library they may be allowed to use the library phone to contact their parent or guardian to arrange to be picked up. If contact with a parent or guardian cannot be made, Library staff will contact the Albany Police Department. In cases where children age 8 or younger are left unattended in the Library on more than one occasion, Library staff may refer the matter to the Albany Police Department or other appropriate social service authorities.

**Children Age 9 or older are welcome to use the Library without a parent or guardian.** All Library users must adhere to the Library's Customer Behavior Policy. Parents are advised that if their child misbehaves, the child may be asked to leave the Library and the Library premises. Parents must realize that, even when not present, they are legally responsible for their child's behavior

#### **Truancy**

In consideration of the many home-schooled children and those who attend alternative education programs, the Library cannot monitor the status of all school-aged children using the Library throughout its hours of operation. If there is a suspected case of truancy, the Library staff will make every effort to determine whether the child has a legitimate reason to

be out of school. The Library staff will contact the appropriate authorities to deal with a suspected truant.

**Children and Use of Library Resources**

Albany Public Library offers materials that reflect the diversity of its user population. It is not the responsibility of the Library or its staff to exercise a supervisory or restrictive role in determining which Library resources young people may use or access. It is the responsibility of a child’s parents and/or designated caregiver to monitor the child’s selection and use of all Library resources. This includes the monitoring of the child’s access to the Internet. The Library encourages parents to set their own family rules, in consultation with their child, regarding use of library resources and services. Library users may consult the Library’s youth services and reference staff for information regarding developing such family rules.

**APPROVED/REVIEWED:**

- Adopted: July 2006
- Amended: October 2016
- Reviewed: November 2017
- December 2020
- October 2021

