



Henderson County Public Library

Safe Child Policy

Purpose: The Henderson County Public Library is committed to providing a safe, welcoming environment for customers of all ages. While library staff is committed to service and safety, they cannot act in place of a parent, guardian, or caregiver. Responsibility for the behavior, safety, and supervision of children in the library rests with the parent or legal guardian, not with library staff.

The Library has adopted the following Safe Child Policy:

Children Age 10 and Younger – Must Be Accompanied

- Children age 10 and under should always be directly supervised by the adult responsible for their safety. Direct supervision implies that the child is within the sight or sound range of the responsible adult.
- During library programs, the caregiver must remain in the building and be immediately available if needed.

Children Ages 11–13 – Limited Unattended Access

- Children aged 11 to 13 may be in the library unaccompanied for up to two hours, provided they are able to follow the Library Behavior Policy and conduct themselves responsibly.
- Failure to follow behavior expectations may result in loss of unaccompanied privileges and the caregiver being contacted.

Teens Age 14 and Older – May Use Library Independently

- Teens age 14 and older may visit the library without time limits, as long as they comply with the Library Behavior Policy and conduct themselves responsibly.

Art Gallery Access

To ensure the protection of artwork and provide a calm, focused environment, individuals under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult when visiting the Dick & Sheila Beaven art gallery. Unaccompanied minors under 16 are not permitted in the gallery area.

Unattended Children and Staff Response

Library staff may intervene in the following situations:

- A child is left unattended in violation of this policy
- A child is at risk, appears frightened, or is unable to care for themselves

- A child is disruptive, disrespectful, or violating the library behavior policy

When these situations occur, staff will:

- Attempt to locate or contact a parent or caregiver immediately.
- If no responsible adult can be reached within a reasonable time, law enforcement may be contacted.
- A written incident report will be completed for all serious or repeated cases.

Closing Time Protocol

If a child under the age of 17 is left at the library at closing:

- Staff will attempt to contact the child's parent or caregiver.
- If contact cannot be made, law enforcement may be called to assume custody.
- Two staff members will remain with the child until appropriate arrangements are made.

Incident Reporting:

Library staff are required to complete an incident report any time they address a behavior issue. These reports help maintain accurate records and support consistent enforcement of this policy.

Legal Reporting Requirements

If library staff suspect that a child may be subject to neglect or abuse as defined in KRS 600.020, the Library Director will be notified and may contact Child Protective Services or local law enforcement. All staff are mandated reporters under Kentucky Statute 620.030 and are legally required to report known or suspected cases of child dependency, neglect, or abuse.

This policy is in place to protect children, assist caregivers, and ensure a safe and respectful environment for all library users. Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in loss of library privileges for the child and/or caregiver. Library staff will use their discretion and judgment when applying the policy.

Adopted by the HCPL Board of Trustees on June 12, 2015.
Reviewed and amended on November 13, 2025.