

MARTIN COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

TO: ALL LIBRARY STAFF
FROM: JENNIFER SALAS, DIRECTOR
PREPARED BY: PUBLIC SERVICES MANAGEMENT TEAM
SUBJECT: YOUTH SERVICES POLICY

EFFECTIVE DATE

December 16, 2004

Revised June 16, 2010

Revised June 16, 2016

Revised March 15, 2017

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the policy is to establish the Martin County Library System's scope of services for children and youth and to define conduct and behavior expectations for children, youth and parent/guardians. Staff guidelines are provided as an attachment and include procedures for children left after hours.

AUTHORITY:

Library Board of Trustees

POLICY:

Martin County Library System's goal in providing services to youth is to promote and encourage the joy of reading. It is our intent to provide positive library experiences in order to foster a lifelong pattern of library usage. All MCLS divisions will be engaged in supporting the objectives of the Library System regarding Youth Services.

Children

Objectives:

1. Provide and maintain a collection that consists of a wide range of juvenile materials in a variety of formats for children, parents, caregivers and adults.
2. Provide professional guidance to children, parents/guardians and adults charged with the care of children.
3. Provide the full range of library services in an age appropriate context.
4. Cultivate the enjoyment of reading for educational and entertainment purposes.
5. Encourage lifelong learning through the use of public library resources.
6. Provide programming that enriches the lives of children, parents/caregivers and highlights the library's diverse resources.
7. Collaborate with Martin County schools, both public and private, in support of school children's educational needs.

8. Provide outreach to area child care centers by providing quality-reading materials for the many young children unable to visit the library.
9. Provide technology access in support of educational and recreational needs of children, as well as opportunities for parent and child to explore technology resources together. Martin County Library System Public Computer and Internet Use Policy (which includes Computers Rules of Use) applies to all patrons, regardless of age.

Young Adults

Objectives:

1. Provide and maintain a collection that consists of a wide range of young adult (YA) materials in a variety of formats for young adults.
2. Encourage young adults' continued use of the library to bridge the gap between library enjoyment as children and library use as adults.
3. Provide the full range of library services in an age appropriate context.
4. Provide programming for Young Adults which may be educational or recreational, and encourages teenagers to come to the library.
5. Provide an opportunity for Young Adults to contribute to their community through content contribution and/or volunteer work.
6. Provide Young Adults a forum for expressing their requests for materials and programming.
7. Provide technology access in support of educational and recreational needs, as well as a diverse array of technology resources to inspire and connect young adults to their community. Martin County Library System Public Computer and Internet Use Policy (which includes Compute Rules of Use) applies to all patrons, regardless of age.

Conduct and Behavior

The Martin County Library System welcomes youth into its facilities and wants to provide a safe and secure environment for children and families that use the library. We ask each parent to join us in protecting all children. The library is not responsible for the care and safety of children, especially when they are left unattended on library premises.

For purposes of this policy, a responsible adult is defined as a parent/guardian, teacher or child-care giver 16 years or older. The Patron Responsibility/Inappropriate Behavior Policy applies to all ages.

1. The responsible adult who has transported minor children onto library premises, or has otherwise directed or allowed minor children onto library premises, shall be responsible for the care and safety of those children at all times. This policy affirms that library staff cannot assume responsibility for unattended children. The responsible adult must be aware of library hours.
2. Children judged by staff to be too young to be without supervision must be accompanied by a responsible adult. If a library staff member becomes aware of an unattended child in the library, reasonable measures will be taken to locate the adult.
3. A disruptive child might be asked to leave the library premises for the remainder of the day. However, if a child has consistently demonstrated particularly disruptive behavior, library staff can require contact with the child's parent before the child may return to the library.

APPROVED BY: _____
Jennifer Salas, Director

DATE: _____

APPROVED BY: _____
Library Board of Trustees

DATE: _____

STAFF GUIDELINES

We welcome and encourage children of all ages to enjoy the library and its resources.

Youth will be served with the same respect and dedication as adult library patrons.

The [Library Code of Conduct](#) applies to library users of all ages. We expect good behavior from everyone.

The library staff is responsible for applying Library policies and guidelines.

If a youth (or anyone else) is having a problem following library guidelines for appropriate behavior, use the following method for soliciting cooperation:

Unsupervised Child

Try to contact the parent or responsible adult by calling the home number. Let them know that we are concerned for the safety of the child and that the child is too young to be left in the library alone.

If an adult cannot be reached – have the child stay close by until the parent/responsible adult does pick up the child. The adult should then be informed that we are concerned for the safety of the child who is too young to be left in the library alone.

Expectations

Let the child know what behavior is expected in the library, i.e.
“We expect you to use quiet voices in the library.”

Consequences

Tell them what the consequences will be if they choose to continue their inappropriate behavior, i.e.
“If you continue to turn up the speaker volume, you will lose your computer privileges.”

Follow-through/Consistency

If they persist in their behavior, you **must** follow-through on the consequences, i.e.
“I have told you that if you went up the elevator one more time you were going to have to leave the library – now I am asking you to leave.”

There is never any need to raise your voice and get angry.

Examples of behavior that will be addressed by staff include, but are not limited to: offensive language, threat of violence, viewing age inappropriate websites, engaging in unauthorized physically active games (tag, shouting, screaming), damaging library property, harassment of another patron or staff. Disruptive conduct is any conduct that prevents others from using the library in its intended way.

Procedure for child left after hours

If there is a child who did not get to the library on their own but came with an adult or older sibling, or got dropped off and is left inside or outside of the library after closing time, staff members should:

- Remember the child may be embarrassed or frightened; always treat him with kindness and respect.

- Let the child make a phone call home or to the person that was supposed to pick them up.
- If no one can be reached, the staff member should wait outside with the child for their ride.
- If no one picks up the child within 15 minutes after closing, the staff member is to call the local police/sheriff's office and have the police/deputy wait with the child or take the child home.
- Non-Emergency Police/Sheriff Station phone numbers:

Blake Library - Stuart Police	287-1122
Indiantown Library	597-2101
All other libraries call	220-7170