

## PUTNAM VALLEY LIBRARY UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY

The mission of the Putnam Valley Library is to serve as a center for community life offering each individual the opportunity to develop personally, academically, culturally, professionally and socially. The Library welcomes individuals of all ages to use the Library and its services in a secure and friendly environment.

### SUPERVISION:

Parents and guardians, not Library staff, are responsible for the care, behavior and supervision of their children while using the Putnam Valley Library and on its property. As the Putnam Valley Library is a public place, the Putnam Valley Library Board of Trustees has adopted the following policies:

1. Children 11 years old or younger, who are using the Library's resources or who are participating in a Library program shall at all times be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult. A responsible adult is defined as a parent, guardian, teacher, or assigned caregiver over the age of 16, who must remain with the child in the Library for the duration of the visit.
2. Children over the age of 12 years may use the Library unattended for a reasonable period of time provided they are able to maintain proper Library behavior. Children must have the telephone numbers of their parent, guardian, or other responsible adult, who may be contacted to come and pick up the child in case of a health emergency, or other special circumstances.
3. Parents are advised that, even in their absence, they are legally responsible for their child's behavior. The Library is not responsible for an unattended child while in the building or if they leave the Library premises.

### DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR:

- If a child behaves in a disruptive manner (whether or not accompanied by a responsible adult), they will be given a warning that they must correct their behavior or leave the Library.
- If the child continues to be disruptive after this warning, then the Library staff, may, at their discretion, contact the responsible adult and ask the child to leave the Library. A staff member will remain with the child until the adult arrives.
- If a responsible adult cannot be contacted within 15 minutes, the Library reserves the right to contact the Sheriff's Department for assistance in order to preserve the Library's operations and/or protect the interests of the child.

### LIBRARY CLOSINGS:

Regularly scheduled closings.

Parents must be aware of the Library's hours and must arrange to pick up their children by closing time. We ask each parent to make advance arrangements to pick up or have their child picked up by a responsible adult by closing and to inform their children what action they are to take in the event of an unexpected closure of the Putnam Valley Library.

If an unattended child is still in the Library at closing time, then the Library staff will act according to the following guidelines:

- Library personnel will not transport or escort the child to any location off the premises under any circumstances.
- Every reasonable effort will be made by the staff to assist the child in contacting an appropriate adult 15 minutes prior to Library closing.
- At least two staff members will remain with the child up to 15 minutes after closing and continue to contact the parent or responsible adult during that time.
- If no responsible adult is reached, the Library reserves the right to contact the Sheriff's Department to request assistance.
- Two staff members will wait with the child until the parent or responsible adult, or the Sheriff's Officer come into the Library to pick up the child.
- Children ages 16 and under will not be left on the Library property unattended after Library hours. If the child leaves the building prior to the arrival of the responsible adult, the Sheriff's Department may be contacted to protect the interests of the child.

### EMERGENCY CLOSINGS.

The Library may have sudden emergencies such as lack of heat or electricity. This may necessitate the Library closing without warning. Significant inclement weather may also necessitate a Library closing. Children should know what to do if the Library must close unexpectedly. If a child is left unattended during an emergency closing, then the same guidelines outlined above under regularly scheduled closings will apply.

**VIOLATION OF THE UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY CONSTITUTES GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION OF LIBRARY PRIVILEGES FOR THE FAMILY**

(adopted by the Putnam Valley Library Board of Trustees 3/20/06)

