

Tyler Public Library  
**POLICY**

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TITLE: **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICY**

EFFECTIVE DATE: 2013-10-01

AUTHORIZED BY: Tyler Public Library Board

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**PURPOSE**

Tyler Public Library is designed to serve children and families with a wide range of educational and recreational collections, programs and services. Tyler Public Library supports parents and guardians in their efforts to guide their children's reading, viewing and listening choices. The purpose of this policy is to inform parents and legal guardians of their responsibilities regarding their children's use of the library.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

Parents and legal guardians are responsible for their children's behavior, safety and welfare while their children are in the library or on library grounds, which includes their children's access to library materials and electronic resources. The Tyler Public Library requires that a parent, legal guardian or other responsible party be present to supervise children ages 12 and younger. A child under the age of 8 must be in sight of a parent. Tyler Public Library staff is available to assist parents, legal guardians and their children in the use of the library; however, Tyler Public Library staff cannot act "in loco parentis" (in place of a parent) for children in the library. If a child or teen is acting in an unsafe manner, behaving inappropriately or appears to be in distress, staff will attempt to locate or contact the parent, legal guardian or other party responsible for the child or teen. If the parent, legal guardian or responsible party cannot be reached, staff will contact law enforcement for assistance, and the child or teen may be banned from the library.

**LIBRARY CARDS**

Children and teens may borrow or use any materials, resources or services in the library, except for E-Readers and American Girl Dolls which may only be borrowed by persons who are 18 or older. For example, the Tyler Public Library will not limit children to the use of books in the children's section of the library, as these materials may not meet the needs and interests of all children. In addition, library staff is not responsible for determining whether materials used by children and teens are "age appropriate." It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to monitor their children's and teens' use of library resources and to determine whether to place restrictions. The Tyler Public Library encourages parents or guardians to talk to their children and teens about the kinds of materials they think are suitable for borrowing or accessing. If a parent or guardian wishes to limit the number of items his child or teen can check out or restrict access to library materials, he should contact a staff member to have the child's or teen's library card note the restrictions. While children and teens may have their own

library cards, the parents or legal guardians of youth under the age of 18 are financially responsible for library materials and equipment their children or teens check out, including items that are lost, damaged or unreturned.

### **LIBRARY FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT**

For the safety of young patrons, the Tyler Public Library strongly recommends that a parent, guardian or other responsible party be present to supervise children when they use library furniture and equipment (e.g. computers, copiers, book drops).

### **CLOSING TIME**

Children ages 12 and under who do not have transportation at closing time will be asked how to contact a parent or legal guardian. If a child is unable to provide this information, staff members may use library records to help locate the parent or legal guardian. Staff will attempt to contact the parent or legal guardian by phone and ask that person to pick up the child within 15 minutes. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, or if a child age 12 and under is not picked up within 15 minutes after closing time, library staff is required to contact law enforcement and report an “abandoned child.” Two staff members will wait with the child in the library or on library property until law enforcement arrives. Under no circumstances will staff provide transportation or accompany a child home.

All policies will be reviewed annually by staff, and significant changes will be brought to the Library Board.