**North Hampton Public Library**

**Children Policy**

North Hampton Public Library welcomes children of all ages to use and enjoy the facilities, collections, and programming offered by the library. The library attempts to provide a safe environment for children while in the library.  However, young children may not be safe when left unattended in the library. For the safety of children and the enjoyment of all patrons using the library, please observe the following rules regarding

       This policy shall apply to children 13 years of age and younger.

The North Hampton Public Library and its staff do not assume responsibility for any child left unattended in the library.

 As used in this policy, the term “parent” also includes legal guardians or other responsible adults (16 years of age or older).

 Children under the age of eleven (11) may not be left unattended at the library unless that child is attending a library program that specifically states that participating children do not have to have a parent in attendance with them. A child is unattended if a parent is not present with the child at all times while in the library.

 At the discretion of a parent, a child aged eleven (11) to thirteen (13) may be left unattended for up to 2 hours as long as the child knows how to reach a parent in case the need arises. Children may not be left longer than two hours; the library does not provide child care services.

If a parent of an unattended child cannot be contacted or if a parent has not picked up a child within one half hour after being contacted, the library staff may call the North Hampton Police Department to take custody of the child. If an unattended child remains at the library at closing time and a parent cannot be contacted or a parent fails to pick-up the child within one half hour of being requested to do so, the North Hampton Police Department will be contacted to take custody of the child.

All library patrons, including children, are subject to the library’s Patron Behavior Policy prohibiting disruptive behavior. Parents are responsible for the behavior of minor children at all times, even if they are not in the library with their children. If a child’s behavior is inappropriate for the library, and the child does not respond to appropriate guidance from library staff, the parent will be requested to remove the child from the library. If the parent refuses to remove the child or cannot be reached, and the child’s behavior is deemed dangerous or unduly disruptive, the North Hampton Police may be called.

If a child is left at the library without a way home at closing time, two library staff must stay with the child in the library. Staff must contact a parent to pick up the child. If a parent is reached, staff will wait with the child for one half hour. If a parent cannot be reached, or library staff have waited more than one half hour for a parent to pick up a child, staff must call the North Hampton Police Department to take custody of the child. Under no circumstances is one staff member to ever be alone in the library or on library property with a child after closing.

Parents should also be aware that the Library does not filter or block internet sites on public computers in accordance with The American Library Association’s recommendation. ("Internet Filtering: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights", American Library Association, July 13, 2015. http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/internet-filtering (Accessed May 31, 2022.)         Approved 6.8.2022 Library Board of Trustees