



PUBLIC SERVICES MANUAL

Section #, Item

Parental Responsibility Policy

Date of Origin:	Owner(s): Director of Public Services
Date(s) of Revision: 6/94, 10/99, 12/09, 2/10	Approved By: Public Services Team

PURPOSE

King County Library System (KCLS) libraries are designed to serve children and families with a wide range of educational and recreational collections, programs and services. KCLS 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 guardians of their responsibilities regarding their children’s use of the library.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Parents and 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.

KCLS strongly recommends that a parent, guardian or other responsible party be present to supervise children ages 12 and younger. KCLS staff is available to assist parents, guardians and their children in the use of the library; however, KCLS 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, guardian or other party responsible for the child or teen. If the parent, guardian or responsible party cannot be reached the child or teen may be banned from the library or staff will contact law enforcement for assistance.

LIBRARY CARDS

Children and teens may borrow or use any materials, resources or services in the library. For example, KCLS 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/guardians to monitor their children’s and teens’ use of library resources and to determine whether to place restrictions. KCLS encourages parents/guardians to talk to their children and teens about the kinds of materials they think are suitable for borrowing or accessing. If a parent/guardian wishes to limit the number of items their child or teen can check out and/or the level of filtering on assigned to their cards, they should contact a staff member to have the child or teen’s library card appropriately blocked.

While children and teens may have their own library cards, the parents/guardian 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.



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COMPUTERS & ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

KCLS provides computers with two levels of filtered access: "some" and "most." The library cards of all children and teens under the age of 17 are automatically set to "some" filtering. Parents and guardians may request the more restrictive level of filtering, found on all computers in the children's areas of KCLS libraries, for their children and teens under the age of 17.

LIBRARY FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT

For the safety of young patrons, KCLS strongly recommends that a parent, guardian or other responsible party be present to supervise children when they use library furniture and equipment (e.g. Self Check-in, 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 guardian. If a child is unable to provide this information, staff members may use library records to help locate the parent/guardian. Staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian by phone and ask that person to come and pick up the child within 15 minutes.

If a parent/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 arrive. Under no circumstances will staff provide transportation or accompany a child home.

DEFINITIONS (*if applicable*)

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SEE ALSO...

- Parental Library Card Notification
- Internet Filtering Policy
- Rules of Conduct Policy