West Georgia Regional LiBRARY SYSTEM

Policy **Unattended Minors**	Date Approved by WGRLS Board **7/28/2020**

Purpose:

WGRLS and the Regional Board welcome and encourage children and their guardians to visit the library, attend library programming, and use library resources. This policy is established for the safety and comfort of WGRLS patrons.

Policy:

Parents, caregivers, and/or guardians of minor children should be aware the library is a public, open building. They are responsible for the safety, behavior, and supervision of children at all times in the library and on library property. Library staff cannot care for unattended children, nor assume responsibility for any child for any period of time.

The following provisions are based on guidelines provided by the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services:

1.Children ages 8 and under are not to be left alone in the library. They must be in the care of someone who is aged 13 or older who is able to effectively supervise young children, and who must be willing and able to provide contact information for an adult parent and/or guardian upon request. These caregivers must remain in the vicinity of children aged 8 and under at all times to ensure safety and appropriate behavior. If the child is under 8 years of age and/or is disruptive to library users or staff, the parent, caregiver, and/or guardian will be contacted. If the parent, caregiver and/or guardian is contacted, they must be present within 30 minutes after contact or police will be contacted to assure the safety of the child. If attempts are made to contact the parent, caregiver, and/or guardian and they do not respond, police will be contacted to assure the safety of the child.

2.Children between the ages of 9 and 12 who comply with the library Code of Conduct may use the library without caregiver supervision. Children in this age range should be willing and able to communicate parent, caregiver, and/or guardian contact information on request. If library staff deem the child unable to abide by the Code of Conduct, attempts will be made to contact the child's parent, caregiver, and/or guardian. If the parent, caregiver and/or guardian is contacted, they must be present within 30 minutes after contact or police will be contacted to assure the safety of the child. If attempts are made to contact the parent, caregiver, and/or guardian and they do not respond, police will be contacted.

3.Children aged 13 and older who comply with the library Code of Conduct may use the library without caregiver supervision. Children in this age range should be willing and able to communicate parent, caregiver, and/or guardian contact information on request. Infractions on the Code of Conduct may result in library staff asking the child to leave the premises. The library does not assume responsibility or liability for children asked to leave the property. For serious infractions of the Code of Conduct, the parent, caregiver, and/or guardian will be contacted, and the police will be contacted.

WGRLS is not responsible for minors without a ride home at closing. Library patrons of all ages must arrange for their ride home prior to the library's closing. Library staff will make no determination as to the suitability or authority of anyone arriving or being contacted to transport a minor from library grounds or for minors leaving library grounds, and cannot legally detain a child who wishes to leave the property.

If more than one library staff member is present at closing, staff will wait up to 15 minutes after the library closes with minors aged 12 and under who lack transportation. After 15 minutes the minor may be considered abandoned, and the police will be contacted to address the situation. Staff will leave a note on the library door with the contact information of the law enforcement personnel who have the child. If only one staff member is available at closing, the police will be contacted to address the situation.

Library staff members are not permitted to transport any child or adult to another location or to stay alone with a child.