

**SUBJECT: UNATTENDED CHILDREN IN NEED OF SUPERVISION**

**EFFECTIVE: DECEMBER 6, 2012**

**SUPERSEDES: 7/2008**

**1. PURPOSE:**

- A. The Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System (THPL) is dedicated to providing a safe and welcoming environment for customers of all ages. THPL is concerned about the welfare and safety of children when they are left unattended.

**2. POLICY:**

- A. Children should be supervised by a caregiver who is able to attend to the child's safety and ensure appropriate behavior.
- B. If a child in need of supervision is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library and inform him or her of LS 503 Unattended Children in Need of Supervision policy.
- C. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended repeatedly, law enforcement may be called for assistance.
- D. Customers of all ages must adhere to the Library's Code of Conduct [LS 502](#).
- E. Library Services will work closely with the City of Tampa Police Department and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office to ensure the safety of unattended children in need of supervision.

**3. PROCEDURE:**

- A. If an unattended child in need of supervision is present in the library during operating hours, and library staff is concerned about the child's welfare or behavior, staff may approach the child. Each case must be evaluated on an individual basis according to the following factors:
  - (1) Age of the child
  - (2) Length of time the child has been left unattended
  - (3) Behavior of the child
  - (4) Care and appearance of the child
- B. If the child is unattended, staff will take the following steps:
  - (1) The in-charge staff member will attempt to contact a caregiver.
  - (2) If a caregiver is reached, LS503 Unattended Children in Need of Supervision policy will be explained over the phone and the staff in-charge shall request that the child be picked up immediately. When the caregiver arrives, the in-charge staff member shall provide them with copies of LS 503 Unattended Children in Need of Supervision, [LS502 Code of Conduct](#)

and the *Unattended Children Guidelines* letter from the Director of Libraries.

(3) If the caregiver cannot be reached, two staff (one of whom must be an in-charge staff member) must wait to see if the child is picked up by a caregiver. If the caregiver arrives in a reasonable amount of time, the in-charge staff member will explain the library's Unattended Children in Need of Supervision policy and provide the caregiver with copies of LS503 Unattended Children in Need of Supervision, [LS502 Code of Conduct](#) and the *Unattended Children Guidelines* letter from the Director of Libraries. The caregiver will also be informed that the authorities will have to be contacted if the child is left unattended again. To document every incident, staff shall fill out a *Hillsborough County Risk Management and Safety Incident Report* form and a *Supervisors' Investigation Report (ICM-009)* form.

(4) If the caregiver cannot be reached, and the in-charge staff member is concerned about the immediate welfare of the child, or if the caregiver has not arrived within twenty (20) minutes after the library's closing time, the appropriate authorities will be contacted, either the City of Tampa Police Department at (813) 231-6130, or the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office at (813) 247-8200. To document every incident of a child left unattended, staff will fill out a *Hillsborough County Risk Management and Safety Incident Report* form and a *Supervisors' Investigation Report (ICM-009)* form.

C. If the caregiver is another child who is not capable of caring for the younger child staff will refer to section 3(A)(1).

#### **4. AUTHORITY:**

Pursuant to Section 5(1) of [Chapter 84-443](#), Laws of Florida, the Library Board has the duty and the responsibility, among others, to serve in a recommending capacity to the Director of Library Services and to the County Administrator in respect to all matters pertaining to the public library.

Approved:

Andrew Breidenbaugh, Director