	City of Murrieta Administrative Policy
	POLICY: **UNATTENDED AND DISRUPTIVE CHILD POLICY**
	POLICY NO.: 200-12 | DATE: June 12, 2018

PURPOSE

The staff of the Murrieta Public Library (hereafter, 'Library') strives to create a warm, inviting, and fun environment for children. The Library offers many programs and services that encourage children to develop a love of books, reading and learning. However, the safety and well-being of children at the Library is of serious concern. It is the intention of this policy to enlist the cooperation of parents and other adults responsible for children to ensure that the Library provides a safe and pleasant experience for all who use it.

POLICY

Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children while they are in the Library and on Library property. The Library staff is committed to helping children with activities related to the Library. However, neither the Library nor its staff acts in loco parentis (in place of parents). The Library is a public facility which is open to everyone, and parents and caregivers are expected to accompany children to ensure the safety and well-being of all who use the public facility. Whenever advisable, the Library will notify the parent of incidents involving an unattended or disruptive child. Parents should not use the Library as an alternative to daycare. For safety's sake, parents should ensure that their children are sufficiently mature, and of the appropriate age, before allowing them to visit the Library without adult supervision. Parents should also realize that, even in their absence, they are ultimately responsible (legally and financially) for their children's behavior.

A. Unattended Children

1. A child through age twelve (12) **must** be accompanied by a responsible adult or mature adolescent over the age of fourteen (14) acting within the capacity of caregiver, babysitter or assigned chaperone while in the Library. Accompanied is defined as within sight.
    a. If a child through the age of twelve (12) is found unattended, Library staff will attempt to locate the parent/guardian, caregiver, babysitter or an assigned chaperone in the Library and inform him/her of the rules. If the parent/guardian, caregiver, babysitter or an assigned chaperone

cannot be found, the Murrieta Police Department may be called for assistance to locate the child's parent/caregiver.

2. The Library is not responsible for the care and supervision of unaccompanied children before, during, or after Library hours.
3. The Library is not responsible for unaccompanied children outside the building who await transportation, who are socializing, or otherwise gathering, before, during, or after Library hours.
4. When the safety of an unattended child is in doubt, or the parent/guardian, caregiver/babysitter or an assigned chaperone cannot be located, or if the Library is closing, Library staff is authorized to call the Murrieta Police Department and stay with the child until the police arrive.
    a. Unless an extenuating circumstance exists (i.e., only one staff member remains onsite), two (2) staff members shall stay with the minor child until a member of the Murrieta Police Department arrive.
    b. In those cases when a single employee will be alone with a minor child, every effort will be made to have the minor with an employee of the same gender.
5. Children using inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the Library. If the child is unattended, the responsibility continues to rest with the parent or caregiver/babysitter.
6. Responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of children using the Library rests with the parent/guardian, caregiver/babysitter or an assigned chaperone. Though staff will always respond with care and concern, they cannot assume responsibility for children's safety and comfort when they are unattended.

B. Teenagers, age thirteen (13) to eighteen (18), are treated as adult users. However, they are still legally the responsibility of their parents and should have an emergency contact available.
    1. Adults responsible for unattended teenage children using the Library should be aware of the Library's hours and make arrangements to meet the children on time. This is a particular concern in inclement weather and after dark.
    2. It is strongly recommended that all children, including teenagers, be accompanied by an adult who can take responsibility should an emergency occur. It is also strongly recommended that they carry a personal mobile device for quick and easy contact. Library phones are for Library business and true emergencies. At a minimum, teenage children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

C. Disruptive Behavior is considered to be behavior that represents physical danger to the child or others, or behavior that interferes with other Library users or staff. Disruptive behavior that is unacceptable in the Library includes, but is *not limited* to:

- Running, chasing, horseplay
- Screaming, shouting, yelling, loud laughing or other noise
- Eating or drinking in prohibited areas
- Abnormal, erratic behavior that hinders normal library use

- Continued or frequent loud talking in study areas
- Pushing, hitting, fighting, biting
- Throwing books or other objects
- Prolonged crying or temper tantrums
- Bullying or bothering other people
- Jumping on furniture
- Climbing on garden walls
- Destruction of property

1. If Library staff becomes aware that the disruptive child is unattended, the Murrieta Police Department may be called.
2. If a group of children is disruptive, the entire group may be asked to leave the Library.
3. Disruptive children may have their visiting privileges suspended by the Library Manager.
    a. The Library Manager or his/her delegate should first attempt to speak to the child/children about their disruptive behavior.
    b. Should the child/children remain disruptive, the Library Manager or his/her delegate should attempt to discuss the behavior with the parents/guardians.
        1) When feasible, the Library Manager should provide written warning prior to any suspension. However, serious violations of Library rules may result in a suspension without a prior verbal or written warning.
        2) In instances where the child/children's school is known, the school district should be notified also.
    c. Should the disruption continue, the Library Manager has the authority to suspend visiting privileges in the Library for a specified time period deemed appropriate.
        1) A suspension letter should be written clearly defining the reasons for the suspension and the length of the suspension.
            a) As a general guideline, a suspension of one (1) month should be suitable but may vary, depending on the severity of the offense.
        2) If a parent or child wishes to appeal the decision of the Library Manager, such appeal should be provided in writing to the City Manager's Office within five (5) calendar days of issuance of the suspension letter. The appeal notice should include the name of suspended child; the parent or guardian's name, address, and phone number; a copy of the suspension letter; and a concise statement as to why the suspension was invalid or unjustified.
            a) The City Manager or designee shall consider all relevant documentation and evidence included with the appeal notice.
            b) The City Manager or designee will review and may reconsider the decision to suspend an individual upon written request and may shorten or terminate the suspension if information

submitted with the appeal notice, in the discretion of the Director, warrants such modification.

c) Until such time as the City Manager or designee issues their final determination, the individual may not use the library. A final determination will be provided to the appealing party in writing within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of the notice of appeal.

3) The suspension of visiting privileges should only be lifted after a written message from a parent/guardian that provides clear instructions of how to notify the parent/guardian if the child/children become disruptive again.

a) As an alternative to a complete suspension, the Library Manager may consider limiting Library visits to when a parent or guardian is present.

HISTORY
Adopted June 12, 2018

KIM SUMMERS
City Manager