



**Address** 123 North Main Street, Fitzgerald, Georgia 31750 | **Phone** (229) 426-5080 | **Fax** (229) 426-5084 | **Website** [www.fbhcl.org](http://www.fbhcl.org)

## **Children and Dependent Person Policy**

*Approved by Board of Trustees January 2012, revised October 2017*

The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Library System is committed to providing its users an atmosphere and environment free from unnecessary distractions and conducive to the most efficient use of library facilities. Part of this commitment is a concern for the safety and welfare of everyone who visits the library.

Library facilities are public buildings, and as such, have special security concerns. When children or dependent persons are left unattended, they may cause a disruption for other library patrons, and there is also a risk of harm to the unattended party or to others they may encounter. Dependent persons may include, for example, persons incapacitated due to physical and/or mental disabilities or other conditions who are dependent on others for their safety and well-being. Library staff have many responsibilities, and they are neither trained nor expected to provide care and supervision for children or dependent persons of any age.

**Responsibility for the safety and behavior of minor children and dependent persons in the Library rests with the parent, guardian, or caregiver, not with the library staff.**

For the protection of children and dependent persons who visit the Library, the following policy has been instituted:

1. Children under the age of ten (10) years must be accompanied by a responsible person fourteen (14) years of age or older when visiting the Library. Children under the age of six (6) years must be within eyesight of a parent, guardian, or responsible, mature caregiver and supervised at all times in all parts of the Library building and Library grounds. Running, pushing, shouting, and rowdy activities in the Library is prohibited and should be stopped at once.
2. All patrons, including children and dependent adults, are subject to the Library's Code of Conduct set forth in the Library's Patron Responsibilities and Conduct Policy.
3. If children under the age of fourteen (14) and dependent persons remain at the Library at closing time, staff will attempt to contact parents or guardians but may not and will not assume responsibility to care for or transport the child. Two staff members will remain with child or dependent person for not more than five (5) minutes then City Police will be called to take charge of minor or dependent person. Staff will complete an incident report, including the names, address, and contact information of all related parties.

When Library staff recognize that a child or dependent person has been left unattended in the library or on its premises, they will:

- Attempt to locate parent, guardian or caregiver by searching the library building and/or grounds.
- When the responsible party is located, the Children and Dependent Person Policy will be explained and a copy will be given to him/her. Staff will complete an incident report, including the names, addresses, and contact information for all related parties.
- Staff will refer any additional incidents to law enforcement or the appropriate authorities.

- If the responsible party cannot be located, staff will contact law enforcement or the appropriate authorities.
- If necessary at any time, staff will contact the appropriate authority or law enforcement to assume responsibility for the welfare of a child or dependent person in need of attention.