

Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

The Library strives to provide a warm, welcoming and safe environment conducive to lifelong learning for patrons of all ages. The Library is particularly concerned for the safety of children and vulnerable adults in and around the Library. Parents and caregivers are responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behavior of persons in their care while they are in the library.

An unattended child is a minor of any age whose behavior requires them to be accompanied by a parent or caregiver. A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18 who is unable or unwilling to care for themselves.

Staff members are responsible for assisting all Library patrons and cannot be responsible for children or vulnerable adults who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior. Library staff are aware that when children and vulnerable adults are left alone they may become frightened or anxious. If they wander through the building they may encounter hazards such as stairs, doors, furniture or electronic equipment. They may also become bored and restless and could disturb the enjoyment and work of others.

The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of young or venerable library patrons:

Children under the age of 8 must have a parent/caregiver aged 12 or older in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child. The assigned caregiver must be a responsible person and must carry emergency contact information.

Children age 8 and older may use the library on their own. However, parents/guardians are still responsible for the actions and well-being of their children. In accordance with the Library's Behavior Policy, patrons, including children, using inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the library. **If a child 8 and older is not able to leave the library on his/her own, then he/she should not be in the library without a parent/caregiver.** All unattended children at the library should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

Vulnerable adults, who can understand and follow the rules of conduct and who can care for themselves, are welcome to be in the Library unattended. Vulnerable adults will be expected to follow the rules of conduct as outlined in the Library's Behavior Policy. They should have contact information for a parent/guardian or caregiver who can assist them in an emergency.

Vulnerable adults who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves must be attended and have adequate supervision at all times by a caregiver 18 years of age or older, who is must be responsible for monitoring the activities and managing their behavior during their Library visits.

Staff will attempt to contact a parent/guardian or caregiver when a child or vulnerable adult's:

- health or safety is in doubt
- actions violate any of the Library's Behavior Policy
- parent/guardian is not present and the child appears to be under 8 years old
- parent/guardian or caregiver is not present at closing time.

For the safety of a child or vulnerable adult left unattended in the library, if attempts to contact the parent/guardian or caregiver have been unsuccessful, the proper authorities will be notified after 15 minutes.

Library staff may not take children or vulnerable adults out of the building, unless caregivers are located within sight of the facility, nor is staff permitted to transport children or vulnerable adults away from Library facilities.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees April 18, 2019.