

Child & Vulnerable Adult Safety Policy

The mission of the Library District is to serve as a center for the community offering each individual the opportunity to develop personally, academically, culturally, professionally, and socially and welcomes individuals of all ages to use its services in a secure, friendly, and safe environment. The Library District encourages children and vulnerable adults to use its facilities and services. However, it is not responsible for these individuals while they are in the building or on the library premises.

Supervision: Parents and guardians, not the Library District staff, are responsible for the care, behavior, and supervision of their children while using Library District services and they are on its property.

As the Library District is a public place, the Board of Trustees has adopted the following policies:

1. Children 9 years old or younger who are using the Library's resources or who are participating in a Library program shall at all times be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult. A responsible adult is defined as a parent, guardian, teacher, or assigned caregiver over the age of 16. That person must remain with the child in the library for the duration of the visit.
2. Children 10 to 13 years of age may use the library on their own for a reasonable period of time provided they are able to abide by the Patron Code of Conduct. Parents are always responsible for the actions of their children. Children who behave inappropriately may be asked to leave the Library. Unattended children must have the phone number of a parent, guardian, or caregiver to contact in case of an emergency or any other circumstance where the child must leave the library.
3. Children/young adults aged 14 to 17 are treated as adults. Parents are advised that even in their absence, they are legally responsible for their child's behavior.

Disruptive Behavior

1. If a child behaves in a disruptive manner, even if they are accompanied by a responsible adult, they will be given a warning that they must correct their behavior or leave the library.
2. If the child continues to be disruptive after this warning, then Library District staff may:
 - o For children 9 and under: ask the parent to remove the child from the library.
 - o For children 10 and over, ask the child to leave the library and, if necessary, contact the responsible adult.

Unattended Children After Closing Time – Regular Scheduled

The Library District will exercise appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of unattended children when closing. Parents must be aware of the Library District's hours and it is the parent's responsibility to make arrangements to pick up their children or make advance arrangements to have their children picked up by a responsible adult by closing time. If an unattended child is still in the library at closing time, then Library District staff will act according to the following guidelines:

1. Every effort will be made by to assist the child in contacting a parent, guardian, or caregiver.
2. Library personnel will NOT transport or escort the child to any location off the premises under any circumstances.

At least two (2) staff members will wait with the child, as necessary, until the parent or responsible adult comes to pick up the child. If a parent, guardian, or caregiver of the child cannot be contacted or located within a reasonable time, then the City or Town police will be contacted to take custody of the child and continue efforts to contact a responsible adult.

Unattended Children – Emergency Closing

Emergencies and inclement weather may force closures without warning. Children should know what to do if the Library District closes unexpectedly. Parents are responsible for their children and must make

arrangements to pick them up. If a child is left unattended during an emergency closing, the same guidelines outlined above under regularly scheduled closings will apply.

Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is an individual over the age of 18 who is developmentally or physically challenged to a degree that may significantly impair their ability to provide adequately for their personal needs and manage their behavior without assistance.

Vulnerable adults must have a parent/guardian or caregiver 18 years of age or older with them while they are in the library who can manage their behavior and provide adequately for their personal needs.

The protocols for vulnerable adults at closing time shall be the same as the rules for an unattended child. Violations of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Safety Policy may result in suspension of library privileges.