

Child Safety & Vulnerable Adults Policy

West Bend Public Library

The West Bend Public Library is a public building and individuals of all ages are welcome. The library strives to be a place of belonging for all and the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults at the library is of utmost importance. Vulnerable adults and young children should be supervised by age appropriate, responsible parties at all times. Guardians and caregivers are responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behavior of persons in their care while they are in the library. The library board and staff respect the rights and privacy of all library patrons. Staff will intervene only when juveniles or vulnerable adults are left unattended and if issues relating to safety and well-being or disruptive behaviors occur. Library staff will follow established procedures for the protection of the involved party or parties and to maintain an environment free from disruption in accordance with the Conduct Policy.

1. Unattended Children/Vulnerable Adults in the Library

- A. An unattended child is a minor of any age whose behavior requires them to be accompanied by a guardian or caregiver. A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18-years-old who is unable to care for themselves.
- B. The library does not have staff, training, or state certification to act as a child care facility or in lieu of trained staff or family for vulnerable adults.
- C. The library staff is further not available to act as caregivers for unattended children and vulnerable adults and is unable to assume responsibility from the guardians or caregivers for providing welfare of persons in their care.
- D. Library staff is not responsible for children or vulnerable adults interacting with or leaving the library with persons who are not appropriate caregivers of or for any consequences related to guardians or caregivers forfeiting their responsibilities.
- E. Library staff may refer to social services or law enforcement those children or vulnerable adults who are left unattended in the library when a guardian/caregiver cannot be reached or if the behavior of the minor child or vulnerable adult falls outside acceptable behavior in the library. Please refer to the Conduct Policy for more information regarding acceptable behavior.

2. Guardian/Caregiver Responsibilities

- A. Guardians/caregivers should remain with persons in their care at all times and are responsible for the care of those persons while in the library.
- B. Guardians/caregivers are asked to model and encourage positive behavior by persons under their care in the library and to cooperate with building staff in instances that persons in their care are disruptive, interfere or endanger others or cause damage to property.
- C. Guardians and caregivers with children who are mature enough to be left alone at the library are responsible for setting reasonable time limits for their children's visits to the library and providing a means of transportation home from the library by the time the library closes.

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3. Staff Guidelines

- A. Staff will attempt to contact the guardian or caregiver to address concerns of lost, unattended, or scared children, vulnerable adults, or their conduct issues.
- B. An incident report will be filled out and kept on record
- C. 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.
- D. For safety reasons, appropriate social service agency or law enforcement may be contacted to take custody of any child or vulnerable adult left unattended in the library for a period exceeding 15 minutes after closing time if attempts to contact the guardian or caregiver are unsuccessful.

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