

Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults

Adopted by the C. A. Friday Memorial Library Board of Trustees on January 29, 2002

Revised: April 9, 2015, June 6 2022

Purpose

Friday Memorial Library welcomes children of all ages as well as vulnerable adults to use and enjoy the facilities, collections, and programs offered by the Library. The Library attempts to provide a safe environment for children to select books and other materials and participate in library programs. While the Library is concerned for the safety of children and vulnerable adults in and around library facilities, the Library does not act in loco parentis (in place of parents). A parent or caregiver is responsible for monitoring the activities and managing the behavior of children or vulnerable adults during their Library visits. Library employees do not serve as a substitute for a daycare or babysitter. The Library is not responsible for any consequences of parents or caregivers not fulfilling their responsibilities.

Guidelines

In order to enable the library staff to promote use and access while insuring the safety of Library users, the Library has established the following guidelines:

- Children ages 8 and older and vulnerable adults who can understand and follow the Rules of Behavior Policy and who can care for themselves may be in the Library unattended.
- A child of any age who is unaccompanied by a responsible adult or a caregiver for an extended period of time (more than 4 hours or over the course of mealtimes) may be approached for information concerning his/her parent's or caregiver's availability.
- Any child aged 8 or older or vulnerable adult left unaccompanied, must have a means of contacting his/her parent or caregiver. The library courtesy phone is available for local calls.
- Children under the age of 8 and vulnerable adults who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves must be accompanied by an adult or responsible person who is age 12 or older at all times while they are in the Library.
- Library staff will attempt to contact a parent or caregiver when:
 - The health or safety of an unattended child or vulnerable adult is in doubt;
 - A child or vulnerable adult is frightened while alone in the Library;
 - The behavior of an unattended child or vulnerable adult disturbs other Library customers and has caused staff to ask the individual to leave the Library;
 - An unattended child or vulnerable adult has not been picked up at closing time.

An exception shall be made for children attending a library program without a parent or caregiver in the room. However, the parent/caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

If a child under age 8 is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent or caregiver in the library and inform him/her of the rules. If the parent or caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended again, the police may be called for assistance. Under no circumstances will any library staff drive or escort anyone to their home.

The Library reserves the right to suspend or revoke library privileges to any patron who does not comply with this Policy or the Rules of Behavior Policy, regardless of age.

Definitions

An unattended child generally is defined as:

- A child under the age of 8 who is not accompanied by a parent or caregiver age 12 or older;
- A child under the age of eighteen (18) who is not accompanied by a parent or caregiver for a period of more than four (4) hours and who does not know or have the information necessary to contact a parent or caregiver;
- A child under the age of eighteen (18) who is not accompanied by a parent or caregiver and who is not picked up by closing time and who needs assistance procuring transportation;
- A child under the age of eighteen (18) who is not accompanied by a parent or caregiver and who appears to need staff help beyond assistance with normal library services.

A vulnerable adult generally is defined as:

- An adult who should not be left alone in the Library or is unable to reasonably care for himself/herself in an emergency situation. This includes adults who are cognitively or physically challenged and who need staff help beyond assistance with normal library services and are not under the direct supervision of a parent or caregiver.
- An individual is considered a vulnerable adult when he/she is not picked up by closing time and needs assistance procuring transportation.