



Unattended Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy

The Brimfield Public Library District strives to provide a welcoming and safe environment for all community members. The Library is particularly concerned for the safety of children and vulnerable adults on the Library premises.

General

While the Library is concerned for the safety of children or vulnerable adults on Library grounds, the Library does not act in loc parentis (in place of parents). A parent, legal guardian, teacher, custodian, or caregiver is responsible for the conduct, safety, and supervision of children or vulnerable adults during library visits.

A vulnerable adult is defined as someone 18 years of age or older who is functionally, mentally, or physically unable to care for themselves. This includes adults who need staff help beyond assistance with normal Library services.

Unsupervised Library Use

A child or vulnerable adult (dependent) is considered mature enough to use the Library unsupervised if:

- The dependent is at least 8 years old;
- The parent, legal guardian, custodian and/or caregiver determines the dependent is mature enough;
- The dependent is able to communicate to the staff their full name, their parent, legal guardian, custodian, and/or caregiver's name and phone number upon request; and
- The dependent follows the Acceptable Library Use Policy

Dependents who do not meet all four criteria must be supervised when in the Library by a responsible caregiver who meets all the criteria and has the ability to supervise the behavior of the dependent.

The Library is a public building. Library staff are not responsible for monitoring interactions between unsupervised dependents and other Library patrons. Additionally, Library staff are not responsible for preventing unsupervised children or vulnerable adults from leaving the Library.

All patrons, including children and vulnerable adults, are subject to Library rules and policies concerning material use, conduct, and demeanor. Repeated violations of rules or policies may result in caregivers being required to supervise a dependent even if the dependent is 8 years of age or older. Staff may make the determination that supervision is required at their discretion.

Children Visiting the Library

Children 7 years of age and younger must be accompanied and directly supervised at all times by a parent or other responsible caregiver 12 years of age or older. Children age 8 and older, are

welcome to use the Library independently. However, responsibility for minors using the Library rests with the parent/guardian regardless of whether the parent or guardian is present. Children are subject to all Library rules and policies.

Children Attending Programs

When attending Library programs, children ages 6-8 may be left at a program. Parents or caregivers are not required to stay in the Library but must be present when the program finishes. Children between the ages of 3-5 must have a caregiver remain in the building throughout the program, unless otherwise specified for the program. Children under 3 years of age must have a parent or caregiver with them in the program.

Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults Safety

During library hours, when the safety of an unattended child or vulnerable adult is in doubt, Library staff will attempt to contact the caregiver before calling 911. In the case of an immediate safety concern, staff will contact 911 immediately and then attempt to contact the caregiver. During emergency evacuations, staff will notify the Person in Charge about the presence of unattended children or vulnerable adults. The Person in Charge will coordinate with first responders.

Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults After Hours

Parents, guardians, custodians, and/or caregivers are responsible for noting scheduled Library closing times and should be aware that the Library may need to close unexpectedly due to emergencies or safety issues. In the event an unattended child under the age of 15 or vulnerable adult is still at the Library when the Library closes to the public, the Person in Charge and one other staff member will remain and attempt to reach the caregiver. If a parent, legal guardian, custodian, and/or caregiver cannot be contacted or located within 15 minutes of closing, staff will contact the police and remain with the dependent until law enforcement arrives. In no instance will staff take anyone home.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees April 3, 2017
Revised July 19, 2021, October 20, 2025