

Policy on Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Carleton A. Friday Memorial Library encourages visits by children, vulnerable adults, and families to use its facilities and services. The purpose of this policy is to encourage parents and caregivers to exercise responsible care, supervision, and control over children and vulnerable adults in order to prevent victimization and to protect their health, safety, and welfare, while also making the library a fair and enjoyable environment for everyone.

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, legal guardian, custodian, 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 daycare or babysitting. The Library is not responsible for any consequences of parents or caregivers not fulfilling their responsibilities.

The Library will adhere to the following guidelines concerning the care and behavior of children and vulnerable adults.

- A. Children ages 8 and older and vulnerable adults who can understand and follow the rules and behavior policy and who can care for themselves may be in the Library unattended. Any child 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.
- B. 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.
- C. Library staff will attempt to contact a parent or caregiver when:
 - a. the health or safety of an unattended child or vulnerable adult is in doubt;
 - b. a child or vulnerable adult is frightened while alone in the Library;
 - c. 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;
 - d. an unattended child or vulnerable adult has not been picked up at closing time.

If a parent or caregiver cannot be reached, Library staff will contact law enforcement officials.

The Library reserves the right to suspend or revoke library privileges.

*Grade school children of all ages are welcome to ride the school bus to the library for sponsored programs and activities, provided their parent or guardian has arranged a ride for them following the conclusion of the program. Due to the busy and sometimes chaotic nature of these events, library staff are unable to manage how and with whom a child leaves the Library.

An unattended child generally is defined as:

- A. a child under the age of 8 who is not accompanied by a parent or caregiver age 12 or older;
- B. a child under the age of eighteen (18) who is not accompanied by a parent or caregiver and who does not know or have the information necessary to contact a parent, legal guardian or other responsible adult;

- C. 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;
- D. 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:

- A. 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 mentally 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 custodian. Additionally, an individual is considered a vulnerable adult when he/she is not picked up by closing time and needs assistance procuring transportation.