

Vulnerable Persons Policy

Approved September 2019

Liberty Lake Municipal Library encourages children and vulnerable adults to use its facility and services. 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, teacher, custodian or caregiver is responsible for monitoring the activities, behavior and well-being of children or vulnerable adults during their Library visits. Library employees have many duties and it is not the library's role to provide long or short term care for children or vulnerable adults. The Library is not responsible for any consequences of parents, legal guardians, teachers, custodians or caregivers not fulfilling their responsibilities.

The safety of children and vulnerable adults is a priority for the Library. However, the Library is a public building, open to all. Therefore, they may be at risk when they are left unattended. There are many factors that could place them in danger.

Children and vulnerable adults could be approached by or tempted to leave with an unscrupulous stranger. They could become frightened, anxious, or ill or could have no place to go in the event of an unexpected closing. Additionally, they usually lack the necessary maturity to handle emergency situations such as severe weather, fire, or civil disturbance.

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

Library staff will attempt to contact a parent, legal guardian, custodian 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 at 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 met by a parent, legal guardian, custodian or responsible caregiver at closing time.

If a parent, legal guardian, custodian or caregiver cannot be reached, Library staff will contact law enforcement officials to take charge of the situation involving the unattended child or vulnerable adult.

Library employees are not permitted to transport children or vulnerable adults away from Library facilities.

Parents, legal guardians, custodians, caregivers, children and vulnerable adults who are in violation of this policy or the Patron Behavior Policy are subject to suspension of library privileges.

A vulnerable child generally is defined as an unattended child under the age of eighteen (18):

- who is deemed by the staff to be at risk
- whose safety or well-being would be at risk if sent outside the library building
- who is not accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, custodian and who does not know or have the information necessary to contact a parent, legal guardian or other responsible adult;
- who is not accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, custodian and who is not picked up by closing time and who needs assistance procuring transportation;

- who is not accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, custodian and who appears to need staff help beyond assistance with normal library services.

A vulnerable adult generally is defined as an individual age eighteen (18) or over:

- who, because of age, developmental disability, mental illness, or physical disability requires supervision or personal care or lacks the personal and social skills to live independently
- 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, legal guardian or custodian.
- who, when he/she is not picked up by closing time, needs assistance procuring transportation.