



Safety and Security

Unattended Children & Vulnerable Adults

Approved by Board of Trustees: June 16, 2016

Effective Date: June 16, 2016

Revisions: July 16, 2024

Purpose:

The Hudson Area Public Library strives to provide all visitors with a welcoming and safe environment. This policy has been developed to protect children and vulnerable adults who visit the library and to clearly communicate expectations to parents, guardians and caregivers.

While library staff are concerned about the safety and welfare of children, they are not authorized to act *in loco parentis* (in place of parent). Additionally, public library employees are not mandated reporters under Wisconsin law.

Unattended Children

Library staff cannot be responsible for children left unattended in the library building or at library programs held off-site.

Library staff cannot ensure children leave the building or program with the intended caregiver. Library staff do not monitor who enters and leaves the building. If a caregiver does not want an unattended child to leave the building, that child should not be left alone.

Library staff do not monitor the materials and resources that patrons browse, use or check out, regardless of the patron's age.

The following levels of supervision are required for minors:

Ages 7 and younger

- Must be directly supervised by a responsible caregiver at all times during their library visit. The caregiver cannot leave the library without the child.
- May attend programs without a caregiver if the program guidelines specify a caregiver is not required. However, a caregiver must not leave the building and must pick up the child from the program's location when the program ends.

Ages 8-10

- May enjoy the children's department while the caregiver briefly visits/uses other areas of the library. However, the caregiver cannot leave the library without the child.
- May attend programs without a caregiver. However, a caregiver must be present to pick up the child when the program ends.

Ages 11 and up

- May attend library programs, browse library collections and use library resources unattended provided they are not disruptive. A caregiver is not required to be present in the building. However, children are subject to the same rules as adult patrons. Children whose behavior is disruptive will be required in future visits to have a caregiver supervise them during their time at the library.

All unattended children must have a phone number of a caregiver who may be contacted in an emergency.

If a child is unattended at closing time, library staff will attempt to call the caregiver's phone number. If the caregiver cannot be reached within 15 minutes, library staff are required to call Hudson Police to report that an unattended child needs transportation. At least two staff members must remain with a vulnerable adult until either a caregiver or a police officer arrives.

Library staff may not transport children to any location, even if requested by the parent or legal guardian.

For the safety and privacy of all patrons, library staff will not disclose over the phone whether a particular patron is in the library, nor will staff seek out a particular patron at the request of a caller. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of library staff in cases of emergency.

Library staff are required to file an incident report if there are violations of this policy. Staff will contact caregivers, notify them that an incident report was filed and explain the policy.

Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is defined as “any adult who has a physical or mental condition that substantially impairs his or her ability to care for his or her needs...”¹

Vulnerable adults who can understand and follow the library’s Patron Responsibility and Code of Conduct Policy and can care for themselves are welcome to visit and use the library unattended.

Unattended vulnerable adults should have contact information for a trusted person in case of an emergency.

Vulnerable adults require caregiver assistance, and should not be left unattended at the library, if any of the following apply:

- Those who are functionally, physically or mentally unable to reasonably respond to an emergency.
- Those who are unable to manage behavior or their personal care needs without assistance
- Those who need help from library staff beyond assistance with normal library services

If a vulnerable adult is unattended at closing time, library staff will attempt to call the individual’s caregiver. If the caregiver cannot be reached within 15 minutes, library staff are required to call Hudson Police to report that a vulnerable adult needs transportation. At least two staff members must remain with a vulnerable adult until either a caregiver or a police officer arrives.

¹ Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

[https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aps/definitions.htm#:~:text=Adult%20at%20Risk%20%E2%80%93%20any%20adult,%C2%A755.01\(1e\)\)](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aps/definitions.htm#:~:text=Adult%20at%20Risk%20%E2%80%93%20any%20adult,%C2%A755.01(1e)))

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