



Safety and Security

Youth Protection

Approved by Board of Trustees: July 16, 2024

Effective Date: July 17, 2024

Revisions:

Purpose:

The Hudson Area Public Library strives to provide all visitors with a welcoming and safe environment. Library staff and patrons will adhere to this policy to provide a safe and comfortable environment for children and their families.

For the purposes of this policy, a minor is defined as anyone age 18 and younger. Additional library policies related to youth protection are as follows:

- Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Programming Policy

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

Library Spaces

The Library has space in the building designated for certain age groups. These spaces are designed to meet the unique needs of youth and include age-specific materials, equipment, and resources.

The Library strives to make youth spaces safe, comfortable and welcoming. To that end, the Library has established the following restrictions:

The Children's Area

- The children's area on the second floor is reserved for children and their families.
- Adults unaccompanied by a child are not permitted to participate in activities and programs designated specifically for children.
- Adults who want to browse and select a book from the children's area, but are unaccompanied by a child, may browse for 15 minutes.

The Teen/Tween Area

- The teen/tween activity area, known as "The Archives," is located on the second floor between the conference room (room 219) and the small meeting room (room 216).
 - Adults unaccompanied by a teen/tween are not permitted to use the space, its equipment or resources.
- The young adult book collection is located on the first floor by the public computer bank.
 - Adults are welcome to browse and make selections from the collection.
 - Adults are prohibited from reading, visiting or lounging in the young adult collection. There is ample seating throughout the building for adult use, including the lobby and adult reading nook on the second floor.

Special Youth Programs

The Library occasionally has programs designed for youth that are held at alternate locations or during hours when the building is closed to the general public. Examples include Teen Night, Tween Night and off-site projects for the library's youth service clubs (K-Kids and Builders Club, co-sponsored with Kiwanis).

Special youth programs have the following requirements:

- A minimum of two staff members are required during programs held offsite or when the library is closed to the general public. The library's youth service clubs, co-sponsored by Kiwanis, are an exception. In those situations, one staff member is acceptable if a Kiwanis-approved advisor is present.
- Adult volunteers at these events must pass a background check per library policy.

Special considerations for after-hours teen/tween nights:

- Permission slips must be signed by a parent/guardian and include contact information in case Library staff need to communicate with the parent/guardian during the event.
- Movies shown must have a rating of PG 13 or lower.
- Eighteen-year-olds may participate if they are still in high school.
- Participants who bully or harass others, or otherwise disrupt the event, will be separated from the activities; and staff will contact a parent/guardian to pick up their child. Depending on the severity of the behavior, or if it reoccurs, the participant may be temporarily or indefinitely banned from future teen/tween nights.
- Participants are discouraged from bringing valuable personal property. The library is not responsible for any items lost, damaged, or stolen during the event.
- The library's doors are locked when the building is not open to the public. Participants must arrive on time to participate in before- or after-hour events. Doors will be locked after 15 minutes.
- Participants must be picked up by a responsible adult at the conclusion of the event. If a participant is unattended after the event, library staff will attempt to call the phone number on the permission slip. After 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 an unattended participant until either they are picked up or a police officer arrives.
- Parents/guardians may allow their teens to drive to the event, but Library staff cannot monitor whether they arrive on time or at all.
- Library staff may not transport children to any location, even if requested by the parent/guardian.

- Events are designed for teens and tweens. Parents/guardians who want to remain at the library during the event must get permission from staff prior to the event.

Interactions with Minors: Library Staff

- Upon request, Library staff will assist children and their families in selecting materials, programs and resources.
- Library staff are prohibited from being alone with a minor in a room with a closed door.
- Library staff are prohibited from communicating one-on-one with minors via text, email or social media messages. Another staff member, or a parent/guardian, must be included in the communications described above. If a staff member receives a message from a minor that does not include a second staff member or parent/guardian, the staff member shall send a response that includes a second staff member or parent/guardian.
- Library staff are prohibited from transporting a child from the building under any circumstances.
- Library staff only disclose the library records of a child under the age of 16 to a custodial parent/guardian as required by WI Statute 43.30.