

LIBRARY CHILD SAFETY AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

The Oakland City - Columbia Township Public Library is a public building and individuals of all ages are welcome. The library strives to be a place of belong for all and the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults at the library is of utmost importance. Vulnerable adults and young children should be supervised by age appropriate, responsible parties at all times. Guardians and caregivers are responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behavior of persons in their care while they are in the library. The Library Board and staff respect the rights and privacy of all library patrons. Staff will intervene only when juveniles or vulnerable adults are left unattended and/or if issues relating to safety and well-being or disruptive behaviors occur.

Unattended Children/Vulnerable Adults in the Library

An unattended child is a minor of any age whose behavior requires them to be accompanied by a guardian or caregiver. A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18-years-old who is unable or unwilling to care for themselves.

- A. The library does not have staff, training, or State Certification to act as a child care facility or in lieu of trained staff or family for vulnerable adults. Furthermore, the library staff is not available to act as caregivers for unattended children and vulnerable adults and is unable to assume responsibility from the guardians or caregivers for providing for the welfare of persons in their care.
- B. Library staff is not responsible for children or vulnerable adults interacting with or leaving the library with persons who are not appropriate caregivers or for any consequences related to parents or caregivers forfeiting their responsibilities.
- C. Library staff may refer to social services or law enforcement those children or vulnerable adults who are left unattended in the library when a parent/guardian cannot be reached or if the behavior of the minor child or vulnerable adult falls outside acceptable behavior in the library.

Please refer to the **Library Conduct Policy** for more information regarding acceptable behavior.

Guardian/Caregiver Responsibilities

- A. Guardians/caregivers should remain with persons in their care at all times and are responsible for the care of those persons while on Library property.
- B. Guardians/caregivers are asked to model and encourage positive behavior by persons under their care in the library and in all areas of the facility and to cooperate with building staff in instances that persons in their care are disruptive, interfere or endanger others, or cause damage to property.
- C. Guardians and caregivers with children who are mature enough to be left alone at the library are responsible for setting reasonable time limits for their children's visits to the library and providing a means of transportation home from the library by the time the library closes. Any child or vulnerable adult visiting the library without their parent/guardian at closing time, is assumed capable of getting themselves home.
- D. Guardians and caregivers are expected to have their own way to communicate with anyone mature enough to be left alone at the library. For safety and security, the library will not pass telephone messages or advise a caller or visitor if any particular individual is in the building.

Staff Guidelines

- A. Staff will attempt to contact the guardian, or caregiver to address concerns of lost, unattended, or scared children, vulnerable adults, or the aforementioned persons with conduct issues.
- B. An incident report will be filled out, given to the Library Director, and kept on file.
- C. Library staff **may not** take children or vulnerable adults out of the building, unless caregivers are located within sight of the facility, nor is staff permitted to transport children or vulnerable adults away from Library facilities.
- D. Should a child or vulnerable adult state they are not willing/able to get themselves home an attempt to contact a guardian/caregiver if known will be made. For safety reasons, local law enforcement will be contacted to assist taking custody of any child or vulnerable adult left unattended in the library for a period exceeding 10 minutes after library closing time or for a period of 15 minutes during open hours if attempts to contact the guardians or caregivers are unsuccessful.

Approved by the Board of Trustees October 12, 2022.