

Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Valley City Barnes County Public Library

Adopted and Approved by Library Board October 17, 2019

Children are encouraged to use the Valley City Barnes County Public Library as a place of study and inquiry. The library encourages parents, guardians, and caregivers to use the library with their children. Children 8 and under must be accompanied at all times by a responsible party. Pre-teens and any child not able to travel alone must be picked up prior to closing. Disruptive juveniles may be asked to leave at the librarian's discretion. Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children; guardians and caregivers are responsible for the behavior of children in their care. The library is not responsible for the safety or security of children left unattended.

Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults

The library strives to maintain a safe environment for library staff and users. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of unattended children and vulnerable adults.

An unattended child is any child not accompanied by a parent, guardian, or caregiver.

A vulnerable adult is an adult who can't care for himself/herself independently without the constant attention of a caregiver.

Library staff are not trained or expected to provide care and supervision for children or other persons in need of constant attention. The parent, guardian, or caregiver is responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behavior of children or other persons requiring supervision during their library visit. The library is not responsible for any consequences of parents, legal guardians, or caregivers not fulfilling their responsibilities.

The library acknowledges that children mature at different ages. These rules are subject to the discretion of library staff who may apply them to children other than the ages stated below if they deem it necessary.

Children 8 and under and vulnerable people of any age must have a parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver at least 12 years old in the immediate vicinity.

Library staff will attempt to contact a parent, guardian, or caregiver when:

- The health or safety of a child or vulnerable adult is in doubt;
- A child or vulnerable adult is frightened while alone at the library;
- The behavior of a child or vulnerable adult disturbs other library patrons and has caused staff to ask the individual to leave the library;

- A child or vulnerable adult has not been met by a parent, guardian, or caregiver at closing time.

If a parent, guardian, or caregiver can't be reached, the police will be notified at the nonemergency number and asked to assist in the successful resolution of the situation.

At Closing

Library employees will notify the Library Supervisor on duty of any unattended child or vulnerable adult still present in the library 10 minutes prior to closing. Staff will help contact a parent, guardian, or caregiver for a ride.

If an unattended child under 12 or a vulnerable person of any age has not successfully contacted a parent, guardian, or caregiver at closing or that caregiver has not arrived by closing, staff will contact the police at the non-emergency number.

Two staff will stay with the child up to 10 minutes after closing.

Under no circumstances will staff take the unattended person to another location.