



Safety of Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Purpose

The Gates Public Library strives to be a safe and nurturing environment for children and adults of all ages. As such, we encourage adults to interact with their children or with vulnerable adults in their care, and to guide their family's usage of the library.

The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children and vulnerable adults in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with library personnel.

During library hours, when the safety of an unattended child or vulnerable adult is in doubt, Library staff will attempt to contact the parent, caregiver, or guardian before calling 911. In the case of an immediate safety concern, staff will contact 911 first and then try to reach out to the parent, caregiver, or guardian. Staff will stay with the person until help arrives.

Unattended Children

While using the library, Children under five years old must be attended and adequately supervised at all times by a responsible person (parent, or caregiver age 14+).

Unaccompanied Children

Children under ten years old may not be left alone at the library. Children ages 10-17 may use the library on their own. All patrons are expected to comply with the **Patron Code of Conduct**.

Parents are responsible for the conduct of their minor children (under 18 years of age) in the library or on library grounds, regardless of whether they are in the company of their children or not.

Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is an individual 18 years or over who is mentally or physically challenged to a degree that may significantly impair that person's ability to provide adequately for their personal needs or manage their behavior without assistance.

- Vulnerable adults must have a parent, guardian, or caregiver 18 years or older with them while in the Library who can manage their behavior and adequately provide for their personal needs.
- Physically challenged adults capable of providing for their own needs are welcome to remain in the library without supervision so long as a contact person is available if the adult's health or safety is in doubt.

(Cont.)

Unaccompanied Children or Vulnerable Adults After Closing Time

The Library is not responsible for children or vulnerable adults without a ride home at closing, and staff cannot give them rides. Library staff will follow the procedure below to ensure the safety of unaccompanied children and vulnerable adults when the Library is closing. Parents/caregivers are responsible for being aware of the Library's hours of operation, and should keep in mind that the Library may close unexpectedly for reasons out of the staff's control, such as a power outage, loss of heat, inclement weather, etc.

1. If no ride has arrived within 15 minutes after closing time, the staff will call the Gates Police Department. Two library staff members will wait for the Police with the child or vulnerable adult.
2. Staff will record the parent's/caregiver's name, address, telephone number and the name of the child or vulnerable adult.
3. Once found, the parent/caregiver will be given a copy of this policy.

Repeated violations of this policy may result in suspension of Library privileges for the family.

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