

Lewiston City Library – Board Policy

Policy on Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults

A parent, legal guardian, teacher, custodian or caregiver is responsible for monitoring the activities and managing the behavior of children or vulnerable adults during their Library visit. The Library, which is open to all, encourages everyone to use its facilities and services. While the Library is concerned for their safety in and around the Library premises, the Library does not act in loco parentis (in place of parents.)

There are many factors that could place unattended children and vulnerable adults in danger. They could be approached by or tempted to leave with an unscrupulous stranger. They could become frightened, anxious, or ill; could have no place to go in the event of an unexpected closing; or could encounter hazards such as stairs or electrical equipment. Additionally, they usually lack the necessary maturity to handle emergency situations such as severe weather, fire, or civil disturbance.

The Library will adhere to the following guidelines concerning the care and behavior of children and vulnerable adults:

- Children under the age of ten (10), and children and vulnerable adults who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves, may not be left alone in the Library and must have adequate supervision while in the Library.
- Children age ten (10) and over, and vulnerable adults who can understand and follow the Code of Conduct and who can care for themselves, are allowed to be in the Library unattended. They should have contact information for someone who can assist them in an emergency.

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

- The health or safety of an unattended child or vulnerable adult is in doubt.
- The behavior of an unattended child or vulnerable adult disturbs other Library patrons and has caused staff to ask the individual to leave the Library.
- An unattended child or vulnerable adult has not been met by a parent, legal guardian, custodian or responsible caregiver at closing time.

If a parent, legal guardian, custodian or caregiver cannot be reached after ten (10) minutes, Library staff will contact the Lewiston Police Department to take charge of the situation involving the unattended child or vulnerable adult.

Parents, legal guardians, custodians, caregivers, children and vulnerable adults who are in violation of this policy or the Code of Conduct are subject to suspension of Library privileges.

Lewiston City Library – Administrative Policy

Staff Guidelines for enforcing policy

Library employees are not permitted to transport children or vulnerable adults away from Library facilities.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to monitor their children's and teens' use of library resources. Lewiston City Library encourages parents/guardians to talk to their children and teens about the kinds of materials they think are suitable for borrowing or accessing. While children and teens may have their own library cards, the parents/guardian of youth under the age of 18 are financially responsible for library materials and equipment their children or teens check out, including items that are lost, damaged, or unreturned.

For the safety of young patrons, Lewiston City Library strongly recommends that a parent, guardian or other responsible party be present to supervise children when they use library furniture and equipment (e.g. Self Check-in, copiers, book drops).

DEFINITIONS

An unattended child generally is defined as:

- A child under the age of ten (10) who is NOT accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, custodian or caregiver aged fifteen (15) years or older.
- A child under the age of ten (10) who is NOT accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, custodian or caregiver AND who does not know or have the information necessary to contact a parent, legal guardian or other responsible adult.
- A child under the age of ten (10) who is NOT accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, custodian or caregiver AND who is not picked up by closing time, and who needs assistance procuring transportation.
- A child under the age of ten (10) who is NOT accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, custodian or caregiver AND who appears to need staff help beyond assistance with normal library services.

A vulnerable adult is an adult who should not be left alone in the Library or is unable to reasonably care for himself/herself in an emergency situation. This includes adults who:

- Are mentally or physically challenged.
- Need staff help beyond assistance with normal Library services.
- Are not under the direct supervision of a parent, legal guardian, custodian or caregiver.
- Are not picked up by closing time and who need assistance procuring transportation.