

Section 1.2: Children and Vulnerable Adults in the Library Policy

(Adopted by the Oak Park Public Library Board of Trustees on August 16, 2022)

1.2.1 Purpose

Children and vulnerable adults are welcome and encouraged to use the Oak Park Public Library (“Library”) at all times. The Library desires to make each visit an important one. The Oak Park Public Library Board (“Library Board”) adopts the following Children and Vulnerable Adults in the Library Policy (“Policy”) with regard to children and vulnerable adults at the Library.

1.2.2 Definitions

- A. “Child” means a minor under the age of 18.
- B. “Vulnerable Adult” means an individual age 18 or over who, because of developmental disability, mental illness, physical disability or other similar reasons, (1) requires supervision or personal care or (2) lacks the personal and social skills required to live independently.
- C. “Responsible Caregiver” is an individual who is responsible for monitoring or caring for a child or vulnerable adult and who must be at least 16 years old.

1.2.3 Rules and Regulations Regarding Children

- A. All patrons, including children, are expected to comply with the Library’s policies, including its Patron Behavior Policy. Parents, guardians, or Responsible Caregivers shall review and be fully aware of all Library policies governing children, including the Internet Use Policy.
- B. Parents, guardians, and Responsible Caregivers are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children regardless of age while in the Library.
- C. Library Staff will not be expected to supervise or monitor children’s behavior.
- D. Children of any age who, because of developmental disability, mental illness, physical disability, or other similar reason, require supervision or personal care shall be attended by a parent, guardian, or Responsible Caregiver at all times.
- E. Children under the age of 14 must have a parent, guardian, or Responsible Caregiver present at the Library while using the Library. The parent, guardian, or Responsible Caregiver shall remain in the Library at all times. If a child under the age of 14 is attending a Library-sponsored program on the premises, the parent, a guardian, or Responsible Caregiver is to remain on the premises for the duration of the program.
- F. Children ages 10 and under must be within the visual contact of a parent, guardian, or Responsible Caregiver at all times. Children 10 and under may not be left in the Children’s Area alone.
- G. Staff will not be responsible if unattended children of any age leave the Library premises alone or with other persons. Further, staff will not be responsible for children who may be asked to leave the Library if the child is in violation of Library policy.

- H. We request that all unattended children be picked up at least ten minutes before closing time.
- I. Children 14 years or older must know their telephone number and other contact information if they are unattended at the Library. It is a violation of Library policy not to come immediately and pick up your unattended child if the Library calls.

1.2.4 Rules and Regulations Regarding Vulnerable Adults

- A. All patrons, including vulnerable adults are expected to comply with the Library's policies, including its Patron Behavior Policy. Parents, guardians, or Responsible Caregivers shall review and be fully aware of all Library policies, particularly the Internet Use Policy.
- B. Parents, guardians, and Responsible Caregivers are responsible for the behavior and supervision of the vulnerable adult in their care while in the Library or on Library property.
- C. Vulnerable adults who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves or who do not have the ability to use the Library independently may not be left alone in the Library and must have adequate supervision while in the Library.
- D. Vulnerable adults who can understand and follow the Patron Behavior Policy 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.
- E. We request that all vulnerable adults be picked up at least ten minutes before closing time.
- F. Vulnerable adults must know their telephone number and other contact information if they are unattended at the Library. It is a violation of Library policy not to come immediately and pick up your vulnerable adult if the Library calls.

1.2.5 Contact with Parent or Guardian for Unattended Child or Vulnerable Adult

- A. Library staff will attempt to contact a parent, legal guardian, or Responsible Caregiver when:
 - 1. The health or safety of an unattended child or vulnerable adult is in doubt;
 - 2. A child or vulnerable adult is frightened while alone at the Library;
 - 3. The behavior of an unattended child or vulnerable adult violates Library policy.
 - 4. The unattended child 14 years of age or younger or vulnerable adult has not been met by a parent, legal guardian, custodian, or Responsible Caregiver at closing time. An individual is considered an unattended vulnerable adult when he/she is not picked up by closing time and needs assistance procuring transportation. A child is considered unattended at closing time if the child is under the age of 14 or a child of any age needs assistance procuring transportation.

- B. If a parent, legal guardian, or Responsible Caregiver cannot be reached at closing time or fails to arrive within 10 minutes after the Library closes, Library staff will contact law enforcement officials to take charge of the situation involving the unattended child or vulnerable adult. Library employees are not permitted to transport an unattended child or vulnerable adult under any circumstances.
- C. Two Library staff members shall remain with the unattended child or vulnerable adult until the Responsible Caregiver or law enforcement arrives.

1.2.6 Violation; Enforcement; Appeal

The Library Director or the Library Director's designee may restrict access to Library facilities with immediate dismissal of the patron from the premises, by suspending the patron's access to Library facilities for a set period of time, or by denying access to specific services and/or programs for violations this Policy. When necessary, the local police may be called to intervene.

- A. Incident Reports. Library staff shall record in writing in the form of an Incident Report any violation of this Policy that resulted in suspension of Library privileges. By the end of the day on which the incident occurred, an Incident Report shall be written and forwarded to the Library Director for logging and review. The report should include physical descriptions in addition to the name of the patron. A copy of the suspension of privileges letter should be attached, if applicable.
- B. Violation of the Policy – Suspension of Privileges. Even if the police have been called to intervene, the Library may still take action to suspend privilege for violations as follows:
 - 1. Initial Violation: Library patrons observed violating this Policy will be asked to cease the violation with a verbal request. If the patron does not comply with the request, he or she will be asked to leave the building for the day. If he or she refuses, the police may be called.
 - 2. Subsequent Violations: The Library Director or the Library Director's authorized designee may further limit or suspend the patron's Library privileges if infractions continue. Such limitation or revocation shall be in writing specifying the nature of the violation. Subsequent violations of the same rule shall result in additional suspensions of increasing length.
- C. Reinstatement. If requested by the Director, the patron whose privileges have been limited or suspended shall attend a meeting with the Library Director or the Library Director's designee to review the Library Patron Behavior Policy before their privileges may be reinstated. The Library Director may impose conditions for the reinstatement.
- D. Right of Appeal. Patrons may appeal (1) a decision to limit or suspend privileges or (2) the conditions placed on reinstatement by sending a written appeal to the Library Board within 10 business days of the date of the decision. The appeal should be sent to the President of the Library Board. The appeal shall be heard by the Board at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The decision of the Library Board is final.