

Bridgman Public Library
Unattended Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy
Bridgman Public Library Joint Board of Directors

1. Purpose:

- A. The Bridgman Public Library is dedicated to providing an environment that is inviting, pleasant, and safe for patrons of all ages. Children and vulnerable adults are always welcome and encouraged to use and enjoy the library. However, the library is a public building that is open to all and therefore cannot be considered a safe place for unattended children and vulnerable adults.
- B. The purpose of this policy is to inform parents and caregivers that the library cannot take responsibility for the safety of an unattended child and vulnerable adults. This policy also explains the procedures staff are required to take if a child or vulnerable adult is left unattended at the library.

2. Definitions:

- A. "Child" means a minor under the age of 18.
- B. "Vulnerable Adult" means an individual age 18 and 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 to live independently.
- C. "Parent or Caregiver" is an individual who is responsible for monitoring and caring for a child or vulnerable adult and who is at least 16 years old.
- D. "Unattended" means that the parent or assigned caregiver is not in the library with the child.

3. Guidelines: *

- A. All patrons, including children and vulnerable adults, are expected to comply with the Library's policies, including its **Patron Behavior Policy**.
- B. Parents and Caregivers are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their child(ren), regardless of age, while in the Library.
- C. Library Staff will not be expected to monitor or supervise the behavior of unattended children or vulnerable adults.
- D. Children under the age of five (5) must be within sight of their parent or caregiver at all times. Children aged 6-9 must have a parent or caregiver present in the Library at all times. Children ages ten (10) and over may be in the Library without a parent or Caregiver. Any child that is left at the Library after closing will be considered unattended.
- E. 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 at any time. Vulnerable Adults who can follow the **Patron Behavior Policy** and can care for themselves are allowed to be unattended in the Library. We request that they have the contact information of a caregiver who can assist them in an emergency.
- F. Vulnerable Adults or children of any age, because of a developmental disability, mental illness, physical disability or other similar reason, are to be attended by a parent or caregiver at all times.
- G. Staff will not be responsible if unattended children of any age or vulnerable adult leave the Library premises alone or with another person. Further, staff will not be responsible for children or vulnerable adults who may be asked to leave the Library if they are in violation of any of the Library's policies.
- H. We request that all unattended children be picked up fifteen (15) minutes prior to closing. Parents and Caregivers are responsible for knowing what time the Library closes.

*There may be exceptions made to these guidelines if the patron is attending a library program. Parents or caregivers are encouraged to ask library staff about specific programs.

4. Procedures:

- A. A child who violates any Library rules or policies may be asked to leave the Library for the day. If an unaccompanied child who needs transportation is asked to leave the library because of a rules violation or an emergency closing of the library, he or she will be given an opportunity to use the library phone to reach a parent or caregiver.
- B. Fifteen minutes before closing, staff members will remind children and vulnerable adults of closing time and allow them to use the library phone to call for transportation. If a child or vulnerable adult who needs transportation is still at the library at closing time, staff members will try to contact their caregiver by phone. **If the parent or other adult has not arrived within fifteen minutes after the library's closing, a staff member will contact the Bridgman Police Department.** Two (2) staff members will stay with the child until the police arrive.
- C. Under no circumstances will a staff member provide transportation for an unattended child or vulnerable adult.

5. Contact with Parent or Caregiver:

- A. A Library staff member will attempt to contact a parent, guardian, or caregiver in the following situations:
 - 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 the child or vulnerable adult violated Library policy.
 - 4) The unattended child or vulnerable adult has not been met by a parent or caregiver by closing time.