



Policy 3063: Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults

Adopted: *May 25, 2011*

Reviewed/Revised: January 28, 2015; February 28, 2018; April 28, 2021; January 24, 2024

I. Introduction

The Algonquin Area Public Library strives to offer a safe and welcoming space for all, regardless of age. The Library is particularly concerned for the safety of children and vulnerable adults but does not act in loco parentis (in place of parents) and is unable to provide parental-type oversight. The Library relies on parents, guardians, and caregivers to monitor the behavior, activities, and whereabouts of children and vulnerable adults.

II. Caregiver Responsibilities

A caregiver is a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult or mature young person age 14 years and older. The responsibility for monitoring the safety, behavior, choices, and materials selections of children and vulnerable adults in the library is solely that of a caregiver, and not of Library staff. Staff cannot assist with any tasks related to personal care. Caregivers should be aware that the Library is a public building open to all individuals and, as such, may be unsafe for unattended children or vulnerable adults.

III. Guidelines for Children Using the Library

1. Children ages 7 years and younger may not be left unattended in the Library and must be directly supervised by a caregiver (remaining in sight) who assumes full responsibility for the child's safety and behavior in the Library. For children ages 7 years and younger who are attending a program at which adult attendance is not required, the caregiver must remain in the building, be available to provide supervision if needed, and join the child at the end of the program.
2. Children ages 8 to 10 years of age may use the Library with a caregiver in the building who assumes full responsibility for the child's safety and behavior in the Library. For children who are attending a program at which adult attendance is not required, the caregiver is not required to stay in the Library, but must join the child at the end of the program.
3. Young people ages 11 to 14 may use the Library on their own, but are still legally the responsibility of their caregiver and should have contact information for someone who can be reached in case of an emergency. If a person in this age group is disruptive or demonstrates inappropriate behavior, the emergency contact will be called to pick up the child, who will be required to leave the library.
4. Young people ages 15 to 17 are treated as adult users, but are still legally the responsibility of their caregiver and must be able to reach an emergency contact if needed. If a person in this age group is disruptive or demonstrates inappropriate behavior, they will be required to leave the library.



IV. Guidelines for Vulnerable Adults Using the Library

Vulnerable adults are adults who are functionally, mentally, or physically unable to care for themselves or need help beyond normal assistance with Library programs or services, and should not be left alone in the Library.

Vulnerable adults who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves must be attended and have adequate supervision at all times. Vulnerable adults who can understand and follow the Code of Conduct and who can care for themselves are welcome to be in the Library unattended. They should have contact information for someone who can be reached in case of an emergency.

Library staff will attempt to contact a parent, guardian, or caregiver if an individual's

- health or safety is in doubt,
- behavior is disruptive to other Library users and has caused staff to ask the individual to leave the Library;
- parent, guardian, or caregiver is not present at closing time.

If an unsupervised vulnerable adult has a medical event or is in crisis, the Library will call 911. If an emergency contact is unable to be reached, any decision to transport the vulnerable adult will be deferred to emergency responders.

V. Unattended Children Ages 10 and Under During Library Hours

If a child aged 10 years or younger appears to be lost or is left unattended, staff members will attempt to locate the caregiver. If the caregiver is not in the building or cannot be contacted within a reasonable amount of time, staff is authorized to call the police to ensure the safety of the child. If the issue is severe enough or becomes chronic in nature, Library privileges may be restricted or terminated for the caregiver and/or the child.

VI. Unattended Children Ages 14 and Under and Vulnerable Adults

After Closing Time

Children and vulnerable adults must be picked up by closing time. If a child 14 and under or a vulnerable adult is found unattended at closing time, staff will attempt to contact the caregiver for pickup. If the wait exceeds 15 minutes, staff is authorized to call the police to ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult. Two staff members will wait until the child or vulnerable adult is picked up by a caregiver or a police officer. Under no circumstances will a staff member take anyone home.