
Board Policy



Unattended Child and Vulnerable Persons Policy

Policy Statement

The Pierce County Library System (the “Library”) strives to provide a safe environment for all visitors, but safety is not guaranteed. This policy supports the Library Rules of Conduct by establishing the standards for the independent use of the Library and its services and facilities by children and vulnerable persons.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform parents, guardians, or assigned chaperones/childcare providers (hereafter, referred to as caregivers) of their responsibilities regarding a child or vulnerable persons’ use of the Library. Library staff do not act in place of the parent or guardian for unsupervised Persons using the Library.

Definitions

- **Child** A minor who is on Library property or at a Library-sponsored event not on Library property at a time a parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver should be present or in the immediate vicinity of the child.
- **Vulnerable person** is someone who needs continuous care and may or may not be a child under the definition contained herein.
- For purposes of this policy, “Child” and “Vulnerable person” are collectively termed as “Person” or “Persons”.

Policy

The responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of Persons requiring parenting, care, or guardianship using the Library, either on Library property or at a Library-sponsored event off Library property, rests with the parent, legal guardian, or designated caregiver.

If a Person is acting in an unsafe manner, behaving inappropriately, or appears to be in distress, staff will attempt to locate or contact the parent, guardian or other party responsible for the Person. If the parent, guardian or responsible party cannot be reached within 30 minutes, local law enforcement officials will be called for assistance.

Persons who do not have transportation at closing time will be asked how to contact a parent or guardian. If a Person is unable to provide this information, staff members shall use Library records to contact the parent/guardian. Staff shall attempt to contact the parent/guardian by phone and request that the Person be picked up within fifteen (15) minutes.

If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, or if the Person is not picked up within fifteen (15) minutes after closing time, Library staff shall contact law enforcement and report an “abandoned child or vulnerable person”, as applicable to the situation. No fewer than two (2) staff members shall wait with the Person in the Library or on Library property or at a Library-sponsored event on or off Library property until law enforcement or other appropriate authorities arrive. Under no circumstances shall staff provide transportation or accompany a Person home.

Organized groups of children, such as school classes, day care groups, and tours, must be supervised or chaperoned by adults at all times while on Library property.

Related Policies

Library Rules of Conduct

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Pierce County Rural Library District on November 8, 2023.

By the enactment of this policy the Board of Trustees of Pierce County Library System is concurrently rescinding any prior policy or procedure within PCLS that is either in conflict with or expansive of the matters addressed in this policy.