



ZION-BENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Unattended Children, Unattended Adults, and Vulnerable Persons Policy

The Zion-Benton Public Library District strives to provide a welcoming and safe environment for all community members. The Library is particularly concerned for the safety of children and vulnerable persons on Library premises.

Caregivers are responsible for monitoring the activities and managing the behavior of children and vulnerable persons. The Zion-Benton Public Library District staff is committed to help children with activities related to the Library. However, Library staff cannot, nor is it their responsibility to serve as loco parentis (in place of parents). Violations of this policy are grounds for suspension of Library privileges. Whenever advisable, the Library will notify the parent of incidents involving an unattended child.

Children under the age of 8 years and vulnerable persons must be accompanied and directly supervised at all times by a parent or other responsible caregiver of at least 14 years of age. When the safety of an unattended child or vulnerable person is in doubt, or the parent or responsible caregiver cannot be located, or if the Library is closing, Library staff is authorized to call the police and stay with the person until the police arrive. These rules may apply to persons over the age of 7 at staff's discretion.

Children of 8 years in age and older may use the Library unattended by an adult, subject to other Library rules and policies concerning behavior, conduct, and demeanor.

A vulnerable person is functionally, mentally or physically unable to care for themselves and should not be left alone in the library including at programs. This includes adults who need staff help beyond the assistance with normal library services.

The children's area of the Library is reserved for children and their parents or responsible caregivers. Adults interested in children's literature or needing assistance regarding service to children are also welcome. Out of concern for the safety of young patrons, adults who are unaccompanied by a child or



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children In the children's area of the Library may be questioned by staff, and may be asked to relocate to another area of the Library.

Unless otherwise specified, children's programs hosted by the Youth Service's Department are open to children and their responsible caretakers. Adults unaccompanied by a child may not attend a children's program without permission of the Youth Services Coordinator.

Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults After hours

In the event a child or vulnerable person is still at the library 15 minutes after the library closes to the public, the police will be called. Attempts will be made during that 15 minutes to reach a caregiver or parents, but in no instance will staff transport patrons.

Adopted 8/28/2018; revised 10/24/2023, reviewed 12/16/2023, approved
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