

**KNOXVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
CHILD SAFETY AND VULNERABLE ADULT POLICY**

**I. Purpose Statement**

The Knoxville Public Library is a public building and individuals of all ages are welcome. The library strives to be a place to belong for all and the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults at the library is of utmost importance. Vulnerable adults and young children should be supervised by age appropriate, responsible parties at all times. Guardians and caregivers are responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behavior of persons in their care while they are in the library and its immediate area. The Library Board and staff respect the rights and privacy of all library patrons. Staff will intervene when juveniles or vulnerable adults are left unattended and if issues relating to safety and well-being or disruptive behaviors occur. Library staff will follow established procedures for the protection of the involved party or parties and to maintain an environment free from disruption in accordance with the Patron Behavior Policy.

**II. Unattended Children/Vulnerable Adults in the Library**

- A. An unattended child is a minor ten (10) years of age and younger. Minors 10 years and older can be unattended and must follow the Patron Behavior Policy. A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18-years-old who is unable or unwilling to care for themselves.
- B. The library does not have staff, training, or State Certification to act as a child care facility or in lieu of trained staff or family for vulnerable adults.
- C. The library staff is not available to act as caregivers for unattended children and vulnerable adults and is unable to assume responsibility from the guardians or caregivers for providing for the welfare of persons in their care.
- D. Library staff is not responsible for children or vulnerable adults interacting with or leaving the library with persons who are not appropriate caregivers or for any consequences related to parents or caregivers forfeiting their responsibilities.
- E. Library staff may refer to social services or law enforcement those children or vulnerable adults who are left unattended in the library when a parent/guardian cannot be reached or if the behavior of the minor child or vulnerable adult falls outside acceptable behavior in the library. Please refer to the Patron Behavior Policy for more information regarding acceptable behavior.

### **III. Guardian/Caregiver Responsibilities**

- A. Guardians/caregivers should remain with persons in their care at all times and are responsible for the care of those persons while on the premises. This expectation refers to the entire facility and its immediate area (park and reading garden).
- B. Guardians/caregivers are asked to model and encourage positive behavior by persons under their care in the library and in all areas of the facility and to cooperate with building staff in instances that persons in their care are disruptive, interfere or endanger others, or cause damage to property.
- C. Guardians and caregivers with children who are mature enough to be left alone at the library are responsible for setting reasonable time limits for their children's visits to the library and providing a means of transportation home from the library by the time the library closes.

### **IV. Staff Guidelines**

- A. Staff will attempt to contact the guardian, or caregiver to address concerns of lost, unattended, scared children, vulnerable adults, or the aforementioned persons with conduct issues.
- B. An incident report will be filled out, given to appropriate personnel, and kept on record.
- C. Library staff may not take children or vulnerable adults out of the building, unless caregivers are located within sight of the facility, nor is staff permitted to transport children or vulnerable adults away from Library facilities.
- D. For safety reasons, appropriate social service agency may be contacted to take custody of any child or vulnerable adult left unattended in the library for a period exceeding 15 minutes during open hours or after closing time if attempts to contact the guardians or caregivers are unsuccessful.
- E. Due to privacy and confidentiality rules, inquiries regarding the whereabouts of patrons in the building, including minors and vulnerable adults, may not be disclosed at any time except in matters of immediate danger and/or requested through a court order.

Approved by the Board of Trustees

Date: May 16, 2023