

Child & Vulnerable Adult Policy

The Catskill Public Library and Palenville Branch Library (the Library) strive to provide a welcoming and safe environment for all visitors.

We encourage children of all ages to visit our libraries and hope that they will find a warm, inviting place to be. Programs and resources are offered to make the library enticing to children and develop a love of books, reading, and libraries.

While the Library is concerned for the safety of children and vulnerable adults on Library property, the Library does not act "In loco parentis" (in place of parents), and Library staff cannot provide parental-type oversight or guidance to children or vulnerable adults. A parent, guardian, or caregiver (PGC) is responsible for monitoring the activities and managing the behavior of children and vulnerable adults during their Library visits.

The following policy has been established for the protection and well-being of children and vulnerable adults visiting our libraries.

Children under 6

Children under the age of 6 must be under the supervision, at all times, of a parent, guardian, or caregiver who is at least 12 years of age. Adequate supervision requires that the responsible person is near, or in sight of, the child.

Children ages 6-9

Children 6-9 years old must be accompanied to the library by a parent, guardian, or caregiver at least 12 years of age. The PGC must remain in the building and maintain the responsibility for the child. PGCs of this age group must notify staff of their whereabouts before leaving the children's services area for a different location within the building.

During story times or other programs, PGCs who do not attend the program with their child/children from this age group must remain in the building and be visible when the program is over.

Children ages 10 to 17

Children ages 10 to 17 are old enough to use the library responsibly. If problems arise, they may be asked to leave, or the parent, guardian, or caregiver on record may be contacted. It is the responsibility of the PGC to be accessible to pick the child up when called.

Disruptive Behavior

Suppose a child behaves disruptively, even when a responsible adult accompanies them. In that case, they will be given a warning that they must correct their behavior or leave the Library.

If the child continues to be disruptive after this warning, the Library Staff will ask the PGC to remove the child from the library. The Library Staff will attempt to contact the PGC for children ten or older and advise them that their child has been asked to leave the premises.

Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is an individual over the age of 18 who is mentally or physically challenged to the degree that may significantly impair that person's ability to provide adequately for their personal needs or manage their behavior without assistance.

Vulnerable adults must have a parent, guardian, or caregiver 18 years of age or older while in the Library who can manage their behavior and provide adequately for their personal needs.

Physically challenged adults capable of providing for their own needs are welcome to remain in the library without supervision so long as a contact person is available if the adult's health or safety is in doubt.

The Library does not have the staff or State Certification to act as a childcare facility or to act in the capacity of trained staff for vulnerable adults. No public place, including the library, can guarantee the safety of children. In all instances, the parent, guardian, or caregiver is responsible for their safety.

During Library hours, when the safety of an unattended child or vulnerable adult is in doubt, Library staff will attempt to contact the PGC before calling 911. In the case of an immediate safety concern, staff will call 911. Staff will then attempt to contact the PGC. Staff will stay with the person until help arrives.

Unattended Children At Closing Time

The Catskill Public Library and Palenville Branch Library will exercise appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of children when the Library is closing. PGCs must be aware of the Library's hours. The PGC's responsibility is to make arrangements to pick up their child or make advance arrangements for their child to be picked up by a responsible adult by closing time.

If a child under the age of 13 or a vulnerable adult is still at the Library after the Library closes to the public, the Person-In-Charge and at least one other staff member will wait up to 15 minutes before contacting 911.

For their protection, children under the age of 13 or vulnerable adults not picked-up 15 minutes after the Library closes will be placed in police custody. Attempts will be made during those 15 minutes to reach a PGC, but in no instance will staff take anyone home. At any time staff is concerned for the safety of the child or vulnerable adult, they will contact 911 immediately.

Violations of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Safety Policy may result in suspension of library privileges for the individual and/or family.

Staff Guidelines

1. Staff will attempt to comfort an upset child.
2. Staff will attempt to contact the parent, guardian or caregiver to address concerns.
3. An incident report will be filled out, given to the Library Director, and kept on record.
4. Library staff may not take children or vulnerable adults out of the building, unless the PGC is within sight of the staff and child or vulnerable adult.
5. Library staff are to encourage minor children to contact the PGC approximately 15 minutes before closing time.
6. For safety reasons, 911 will be contacted to take custody of any child or vulnerable adult left unattended in the Library, or beyond 15 minutes after closing.

**Resolution: Adopted on July 17, 2019 by unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees of the Catskill Public Library.
Resolution: Amended on May 18, 2022 by unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees of the Catskill Public Library.**