MONMOUTH COUNTY LIBRARY

Library Policy for Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Monmouth County Library is dedicated to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all community members. We strive to be a doorway through which a life-long interest in learning and reading takes place. The purpose of this policy is to provide the greatest possible degree of protection for minor children** and vulnerable adults* in the community and to create a productive and enjoyable environment for all patrons and staff.

Children 9 years of age and younger:
Must be under the direct supervision of a parent, guardian, or caregiver when in the Library or on library grounds, which means that the child must remain within view at all times during the entire library visit.

Children 10 to 13 years of age and vulnerable adults:
Shall not be left unattended in the Library or on library grounds. Attended is defined as a parent, guardian, or caregiver being present in the building, but not necessarily with direct supervision of the child or vulnerable adult.

Children under 18 years of age and vulnerable adults:
Parents, guardians, or caregivers are solely responsible for the conduct, behavior, and safety of minor children and vulnerable adults in the Library or on library grounds.

- Library staff is authorized to contact police in the event the parent, guardian, or caregiver fails to comply with these regulations, or leaves a child or vulnerable adult unattended or unattended at closing.
- Exceptions to this policy occur when programming requires children to attend on their own. At these times, children should be brought to the activity prior to the program, and the responsible parent, guardian, or caregiver should remain outside the door of the activity room awaiting its conclusion.
- It is essential for the safety of all children and vulnerable adults that they be picked up prior to the Library's closing time. Library staff will call the police or other appropriate municipal, county or state agency if a child or vulnerable adult is left unattended when a Library facility closes or if an individual otherwise appears to be at risk.
- Guardian or caregiver is defined as an individual 18 years of age and older possessed with the ability to assume responsibility for behavior of children or vulnerable adults.

**A vulnerable adult means a person 18 years of age or older who resides in a community setting and who, because of a physical or mental illness, disability or deficiency, lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make, communicate, or carry out decisions concerning his/her well-being and is the subject of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Vulnerable adults may not be left alone in the Library. This includes adults who need staff help outside the scope of regular library services. Staff cannot assist with tasks related to personal care.*

***Leaving a child unattended may result in violation of N.J.S.A. 2A:53A-14, N.J.S.A. 2A:53A-15; liability of parent or guardian for negligence.*

Approved by the Monmouth County Library Commission – September 8, 2020