

# Unattended and Vulnerable Patron Policy



The Leach Public Library welcomes and encourages people of all ages and abilities to use the library for both study and recreation, and therefore strives to maintain a safe environment for all patrons. The library is particularly concerned for the safety of children and vulnerable adults. Library facilities are neither licensed nor allowed to provide childcare services. Library staff members are not substitutes for babysitters, teachers, or disciplinarians. The behavior and welfare of children and vulnerable adults are the responsibility of that individual's parent, guardian, or designated caregiver.

## **Definitions**

- A child means any minor under 18 years of age.
- A vulnerable adult is defined by the North Dakota Century Code (50-25-2) as "an adult who has a substantial mental or functional impairment." Additionally, a vulnerable adult is considered to be unable to meet their personal and behavioral needs without assistance.
- A responsible adult includes parents, legal guardians, teachers, or designated caregiver (over age 12 for children and age 18 for vulnerable adults).

## **Regulations Regarding Children**

- All patrons, including children, are expected to comply with the library's policies including the Patron Conduct Policy.
- Children 8 years of age and under are required to be accompanied at all times by a responsible adult. This person is responsible for the care, behavior and supervision of their child while in the library or on library property.
- Children between age 9 and 14 may use the library on their own for a reasonable period of time, provided that they model proper library behavior. Those who behave inappropriately may be asked to leave.
- Children over the age of 14 will be treated as adults.
- Children of any age who require supervision or personal care while in the library must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

- Children 5 years of age and older may attend library programs without their parent or caregiver. Caregivers are required to be in the building for children 3-5 years of age. Caregivers must remain with children under the age of 3 while they attend library programs.
- Library staff is not responsible if any unattended child leaves the library building or grounds, including those children who have been asked to leave due to a policy violation.
- Unattended children should be picked up at least 10 minutes before the library closes. Children should know the phone number or contact information for a responsible adult if they are to be unattended while at the library.

### **Regulations Regarding Vulnerable Adults**

- All patrons, including vulnerable adults, are expected to comply with the library's policies including the Patron Conduct Policy.
- Vulnerable adults who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves or monitor their behavior must be accompanied by a responsible adult with in the library or on library property.
- Vulnerable adults who are able to care for themselves are welcome without supervision, as long as they have the contact information for someone who can assist them in an emergency.
- Library staff will not monitor or supervise a vulnerable adult's behavior.
- Library staff is not responsible if any unattended vulnerable adult leaves the library building or grounds, including those who have been asked to leave due to a policy violation.

### **At Closing**

Unattended children who are unable to travel on their own and unattended vulnerable adults are required to be picked up before the library closes. Library staff will assist these individuals contact a parent or other responsible adult. A staff member will wait with the individual until they can be picked up, but not longer than 15 minutes after the library closes. If a responsible adult cannot be reached or does not arrive within a reasonable amount of time after being contacted, the staff person will call the police non-emergency number, and stay with the patron until the police arrive.

The library staff person will not transport or escort the unattended child or vulnerable adult off library property under any circumstances.

In cases of emergency closures, the same guidelines will apply.

Approved the Leach Public Library Board

February 24, 2022