



Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults

Grafton-Midview Public Library

Policy

The Grafton-Midview Public Library welcomes individuals of all ages to use its facility, services and resources. The library is committed to the well-being of all library patrons including children and vulnerable adults. Library staff is available to assist and support patrons in using the library. However, library staff is not responsible for children who are left unattended on library premises. This policy is intended to guide the public and staff on instances of unattended or disruptive children and vulnerable adults in the library.

We encourage families and youth to use the library and, while doing so, also affirm parents' responsibility for their children's safety and upbringing. Children, like all library patrons, are expected to behave appropriately. Parents, caregivers, or legal guardians, not library staff, are responsible for the behavior of their children or vulnerable adults in the library, whether or not the parent or caregiver is present.

Children seven (7) and younger must have active supervision during their time at the library. Children who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves may not be left alone in the library, and must have adequate supervision from a caregiver as well.

Parents and caregivers are responsible for being aware of the library's hours and policies. Parents and caregivers should keep in mind that the library may close unexpectedly for reasons out of the control of staff, such as loss of power, inclement weather, etc. In the event of an unexpected event, children and vulnerable adults should know who to contact. If a child or vulnerable adult is attending a program at the library, a parent or caregiver is responsible for making arrangements regarding pick-up.

Staff does not monitor the arrival or departure of any child or vulnerable adult from a program or the building. A good rule of thumb is if the child or vulnerable adult cannot leave the library alone, the child or vulnerable adult should not be at the library alone.

For parents or caregivers who forfeit their responsibilities, library staff may refer those children who are left unattended in the library to the appropriate authorities.

Procedures

Disruptive Behavior

Library staff will use sound judgment and assess the facts and conditions of each situation of an unattended or disruptive child or vulnerable adult. If a child or vulnerable adult is acting disruptively, staff will:

1. Ask him/her to correct the behavior and notify him/her that this counts as a warning, and the next step is for them to leave the premises. If caregiver is present, staff will request they intervene with the child.

2. If the behavior continues, staff will ask the child or disruptive adult to leave the premises for the rest of the day. If the child or vulnerable adult is at the library alone the staff member will attempt to contact a parent or guardian. Once contacted, the staff member will inform the parent or caregiver of the behavior or incident that occurred and of the library policy. Each staff member is expected to handle situations as they arise following the procedures. If they are uncomfortable, or unable to they are expected to ask a manager for assistance.

This situation should be handled in a positive manner, emphasizing our concern for the safety of the child or vulnerable adult. If a parent or caregiver has not been located within an hour of the first attempt, the person in charge will notify the Grafton police.

Upon a child being asked to leave the library for disruptive behavior, if the parent/caregiver was not successfully contacted, a letter specifying the nature of the violations will be sent home, in which the library will request acknowledgement of receipt through phone, email, or in-person visit. If receipt is not acknowledged, the library will follow up with one call to the parent/caregiver.

After three incidents, the continued disruptive behavior shall result in longer suspensions of library privileges not to exceed one year. Parents will be notified of the suspension in writing specifying the nature of the violations.

Unattended Child or Vulnerable Adult

If a child seven (7) or under is considered to be lost or unattended, staff should bring the child to a Youth Services Department staff member or person in charge. If a vulnerable adult is considered to be lost or unattended, staff should bring the adult to an Adult Services staff member or person in charge. The staff member will attempt to contact a parent or guardian. This situation should be handled in a positive manner, emphasizing our concern for the safety of the child or vulnerable adult. If a parent or caregiver has not been located within an hour of the first attempt or within fifteen (15) minutes after closing time, the staff member or the person in charge will notify the Grafton police. Under no circumstances should a staff member take a child

or vulnerable adult from the premises. If the library is closed, two staff members are required to stay until a parent/caregiver or the police arrive. If the parent or caregiver does not arrive before the police, a note will be posted on the library's doors stating: Unattended child in custody of Grafton Police. 1009 Chestnut Street, Grafton, OH (440) 926-2662.

Library staff will attempt to contact a parent or caregiver when:

- The health or safety of a child or vulnerable adult is in question;
- A child seven (7) or under is unattended;
- A child or vulnerable adult is frightened while alone at the library;
- The behavior of a child or vulnerable adult is deemed disruptive and he/she has already received one warning;
- A vulnerable adult or child twelve (12) or under has not been met by a parent or caregiver at closing time.

When a child or vulnerable adult is asked to leave the premises or remains fifteen (15) minutes after closing, an incident report in writing must be submitted to the Library Director.

Note, too, that library staff cannot verify the ages of children who come into the facility. If a well-behaved five-year-old plays quietly in a part of the library staff may not notice that the child is unattended. Also, depending on the circumstances, an eight-year-old may require less supervision than a 14-year-old or a disruptive adult.

The Grafton-Midview Public Library has adopted the following grievance procedure for those wishing to file a complaint:

- The complaint should be in writing and contain information such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date and description of complaint.
- The complaint should be submitted as soon as possible to the Grafton-Midview Public Library Board of Trustees at 983 Main St., Grafton, OH 44044.

The Board of Trustees have 45 days to respond in writing to the complainant.

Definitions

A child is defined as any person below the age of 18.

An unattended child is defined as any child below the age of 7 whose safety and well-being is threatened by being left unattended for an inappropriate length of time considering the child's age, maturity and level of development.

Vulnerable adults are those who are unable to reasonably care for themselves in an emergency situation. This includes adults who are mentally or physically challenged and who need staff help beyond assistance with normal library services.

Behavior is considered disruptive when it disturbs the normal use of the library by other patrons, interferes with the staff in the performance of their duties, or endangers the well-being of anyone, including themselves.

Approved by GMPL Board of Trustees on April 8, 2014
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