

Prince William Public Libraries
Library Policies
Unattended Children and
Vulnerable Adults Policy

Reviewed by the Library Advisory Board of Trustees 2/22/2024
Approved by the Library Director 02/06/2024

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Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Prince William Public Libraries (PWPL) welcomes children and vulnerable adults, provided their behavior conforms to the PWPL Code of Conduct. PWPL staff are committed to the well-being and safety of children and vulnerable adults and are happy to help them use the library. Any public place may pose risks for a child or vulnerable adult left unattended and unsupervised by a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver. Parents, legal guardians, or caregivers must control and prevent behavior that disrupts the normal operations of the library or disturbs library users or staff and abide by the following policy.

Unattended Children

- Children under the age of twelve (12) must always be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver and should not be dropped off at the library. If a child is unattended, PWPL staff will contact the child's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver. Children 12 and older may use the library unattended, provided they follow the PWPL Code of Conduct.
- Children eight (8) years of age and younger must be directly supervised by a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver on library property.
- Staff can assist children using library resources but cannot provide childcare or assume responsibility for their safety. Parents, legal guardians, or caregivers are responsible for their child's behavior and appropriate use of the library materials and space. PWPL staff will intervene if children are left unattended or if there are concerns over safety, disruptive behavior, property damage, or well-being.
- If a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver cannot be reached by closing time or fails to arrive within 30 minutes after being contacted, PWPL staff will contact legal authorities to take charge of the situation involving the unattended child. PWPL employees are prohibited from transporting an unattended child under any circumstances.

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Vulnerable Adults

- A vulnerable adult is any person 18 years of age or older who is impaired by reason of mental illness, intellectual or developmental disability, physical illness or disability, or other causes, including age, to the extent the adult lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make, communicate, or carry out reasonable decisions concerning their well-being or has one or more limitations that substantially impair the adult's ability to independently provide for their daily needs or safeguard their person, property, or legal interests. (Code Ann. 18.2-369)
- Staff can assist Vulnerable adults using library resources but cannot provide assistive care or assume responsibility for their safety. Legal guardians or caregivers are responsible for their vulnerable adult's behavior and appropriate use of the library materials and space. PWPL staff will intervene if vulnerable adults are left unattended or if there are concerns over safety, disruptive behavior, property damage, or well-being.
- If a legal guardian or caregiver cannot be reached by closing time or fails to arrive within 30 minutes after being contacted, PWPL staff will contact legal authorities. PWPL employees are prohibited from transporting an unattended vulnerable adult under any circumstances.