

# Safety of Unaccompanied Children and Vulnerable Adults

## Background

The High River Library welcomes all community members to use its facilities and services. However, parents/guardians/responsible caregivers should be aware that the library is a public place. Library staff cannot assume responsibility for the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults left unattended on the premises. Responsibility for the welfare and the behaviour of children and vulnerable adults using the library ultimately rests with the parent/guardian or an assigned caregiver.

## Definitions

Unattended children are children of any age who are apparently unaccompanied by a parent, guardian, and/or caregiver. Vulnerable adults are unaccompanied persons who would typically have a caregiver and whose safety or well-being might be endangered in the absence of that caregiver.

## Policy

Children under six (6) years of age and vulnerable adults—Children under six and vulnerable adults must be accompanied by a responsible person at all times. During programs, parents/guardians, or caregivers are free to browse within the library but should not leave the premises.

Children between the ages of six (6) and twelve (12)—Children ages six to twelve may come into the library independently but should not be left unattended for substantial periods of time. If a child is unable to use library resources and spaces safely and in a responsible fashion, library staff may request parents/guardians/caregivers to remain within eyesight of their children regardless of the age of the child.

In most circumstances, the health and safety of children/vulnerable adults is not an issue. However, library staff will intervene when they become aware of the following (or similar) situations:

- A child/vulnerable adult is alone, visibly upset or ill;
- A child under the age of 12 is left alone with younger siblings;
- A child/vulnerable adult is alone and doing something dangerous, or another person in the library seems to be a danger to the child/vulnerable adult;
- A child/vulnerable adult is alone, and is not following library rules after reasonable warnings;
- A child/vulnerable adult is left alone at the library at closing time or in the event of an emergency.