

Youth Safety Policy

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees Nov. 19, 2019. Revised Nov. 21, 2023.

Objectives

The Carnegie-Schadde Memorial Public Library is dedicated to providing a safe and welcoming environment for families, children, and teens. Thus we offer designated children and teen areas, programs, materials, and services to ensure worthwhile and age-appropriate experiences for all.

Our top priority is the provision of a safe environment for all children and teens. However, parents/caregivers are responsible for the safety and behavior of their youth.

Unaccompanied Youth

An unaccompanied youth is anyone under the age of 18 who is at the library unaccompanied by their parent/guardian or a caretaker designated by their parent/guardian.

The Library is not equipped and it is not the Library's role to provide long- or short-term child care. Children age 8 or younger must have a parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver age 12 or older accompanying them in the library.

Parents/guardians are responsible for the behavior of their children and teens of any age. Youth over age 8 with additional needs related to physical or mental ability, inconsistent behavior patterns, emotional problems, lack of adequate attention span, or incomplete social skills, that prevent them from following rules on their own must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or mature caregiver.

Children or teens with past library policy violations may be required to have a parent/guardian with them in the library at all times. Parents will be notified of this restriction via phone or mail.

Library staff will attempt to contact a parent/guardian under the following circumstances:

- The child appears to be seriously ill, injured, or upset
- The child appears to be threatened by others
- The child's behavior is disruptive or inappropriate

For their safety, all children should know their parents' telephone number. Parents/guardians are encouraged to keep library card account information up-to-date so they can be contacted in an emergency. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, Library staff will notify law enforcement or child protective services as appropriate.

Unaccompanied Adults

An unaccompanied adult is anyone over the age of 18 who is in the children's or teen area of the library without a child or teen companion.

The children's area of the Library is reserved for children (ages 0-11 years), their parents, guardians, or caregivers. The children's area is located on the 3rd floor of the library, and includes children's computers, collection areas, children's program room, and children's study rooms. Adults and teens who are unaccompanied by a child or children in the children's area of the Library may be questioned by staff, and may be asked to move to another area of the Library. Unaccompanied adults/teens interested in children's literature, such as teachers and college students are welcome to browse the collections or look for items, but should leave the area when they are finished.

The teen area is strictly reserved for youth ages 12-18. The teen area is located on the 1st floor of the library, North of the main service desk. This area includes the teen computers, collection areas, and teen study rooms. If a teen is caring for a younger child, that child may stay in the teen area as long as they are properly supervised. Adults and children who are unaccompanied by a teen in the teen area of the Library may be questioned by staff, and may be asked to move to another area of the Library. Unaccompanied adults/children interested in teen literature or special collections (e.g. manga, anime) are welcome to browse the collections or look for items, but should leave the area when they are finished.

Youth Programs and Events

Children age 6 or older can attend programs without an adult. However, parents or caregivers for children age 8 or younger who do not attend the program with the child must remain in the building. Adult parents/guardians are welcome to attend children's programs with their child up to age 11. If a child needs accommodations at a program or event, arrangements must be made with staff prior to the start of the program. Unaccompanied adults are not allowed to attend youth programs.

Teen programs are for youth ages 12-18. Parents/guardians of teens may remain in the building during the program, but are not allowed in the teen programs. If a teen needs accommodations at a program or event, arrangements must be made with staff prior to the start of the program.

Computer Use

The public computers located in the children's and teen areas are for use by children and teens. Parents may also use the children's computer when accompanied by their child.

With a valid library card, youth of any age are allowed to use the computer and access the Internet. The public library, unlike schools, does not serve *in loco parentis* (in place of parent). Librarians cannot act in the place of parents in providing constant care and supervision of children as they explore the Internet. Carnegie-Schadde Memorial Public Library supports the right for each family to decide what appropriate Internet use is for their children. The responsibility for what minors read or view on the Internet rests with parents or guardians. (See Internet Use Policy)

73

74 **After Hours**

75 Parents/guardians are responsible for having their children and younger teens picked up before the
76 Library is closed. If a child under the age of 14 has been left at the Library at closing time, every attempt
77 will be made to contact the child's family. The Baraboo Police will be called if no one can be reached.
78 Two library staff persons will remain with the child until the parent/guardian or police arrive.

79

80 **Staff Transporting Youth**

81 Library staff will not transport any child or teen from the Library to another location.

82

83 **Policy Enforcement**

84 Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 43.52(2) states: "Every public library shall be free for the use of the
85 inhabitants of the municipality by which it is established and maintained, subject to such reasonable
86 regulations as the library board prescribes in order to render its use most beneficial to the greatest
87 number. The library board may exclude from the use of the public library all persons who willfully
88 violate such regulations."

89

90 Library staff may require violators of this policy to leave the premises, call the police, and /or ultimately
91 revoke a patron's library privileges for noncompliance with this policy. (See Conduct Policy)