

Policy

Children's Safety Policy

Approved by Board of Trustees: August 2024

Last Updated: August 2024

Last Review: April 2023

The Dauphin County Library System (The Library) is committed to providing a safe and welcoming space to anyone visiting The Library including children.

The Library is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion and applying all policies in a neutral and nondiscriminatory manner and with an empathy driven approach.

Parent/Guardian or Designated Caregiver Responsibilities

The care, safety, and behavior of children, both in library buildings and on library property, is the responsibility of the parent/guardian or designated caregiver. All library users, regardless of age, must follow the Library Use Policy.

A designated caregiver is an individual who is assigned responsibility for a child by a parent or legal guardian. While a designated caregiver is most often an adult, a designated caregiver may be a minor (e.g. sibling, friend, etc.) older than 12 years of age who acts responsibly for younger children.

Age Requirements

Children under 6

Children under the age of 6 may not be left unattended by a parent/guardian or designated caregiver in any part of The Library.

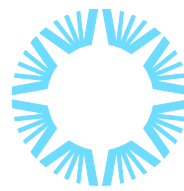
Children 6-11

Children 6-11 must have a parent/guardian or designated caregiver in the building with them at all times during the library visit.

A parent/guardian or designated caregiver who does not attend a program with the child (with permission from staff) must remain in the building for the duration of the program and must pick up their child at the conclusion of the program.

Children 12 years and older

Children 12 and over may use The Library unattended, if they adhere to all library policies. If problems arise, library staff, at their discretion, may ask the child to leave and may inform a parent/guardian or designated caregiver of the incident.



Unattended Youth

Library staff will not supervise or be responsible for children of any age who are using The Library or when they leave the building. If children under the age of 12 are found without a parent/guardian or designated caregiver, staff will attempt to locate the responsible individual.

A supervisor will contact a parent/guardian or designated caregiver when concerns exist regarding a child's behavior or extended stay in The Library. Child Welfare may be contacted if the situation is not resolved.

Children who are left in The Library at closing without a responsible parent/guardian or designated caregiver will be turned over to local police if the parent/guardian or designated caregiver cannot be reached.

Under no circumstances will library staff provide transportation for any library member.

Due to potential custody disputes, library staff will not disclose whether a minor is currently in The Library or has left for the day, without a request from law enforcement.

Mandated Reporter

Under the law, library staff are designated mandated reporters. A mandated reporter is a person who is required to make a report of suspected child abuse if the person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse (23 Pa. C.S. §6311 (a)):

Library card registration information may be obtained from authorized library staff as long as any information about materials borrowed by the individual is not disclosed.

Any person required to report suspected child abuse, who in good faith reports or causes the report to be made, shall have immunity from civil and criminal liability related to those actions (23 Pa. C.S. §6318).

Children's Area Use

For the safety of the children using The Library, adults not actively using the children's resources and collections in the children area of The Library, will be asked to relocate to the adult area of The Library. This does not include adults who are participating in an adult day care program under the supervision of caregivers.

Restrooms in the children's area are for children and their parents/guardians or designated caregivers and adults and their caregivers participating in an adult day care program.