

## GRIMES PUBLIC LIBRARY UNATTENDED CHILD & VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

The Grimes Public Library welcomes all individuals. Vulnerable individuals and young children should always be supervised by age-appropriate, responsible parties. The safety of children and vulnerable individuals is a priority for the Library. However, the Library is a public building, open to all. Therefore, they may be at risk when they are left unattended. Parents and caregivers are responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behavior of persons in their care while they are in the Library. The Library Board and Staff respect the rights and privacy of all library patrons. However, Library staff may intervene when children or vulnerable individuals are left unattended or issues relating to safety, disruptive behavior, or well-being occur. Library Staff aim to maintain a pleasant environment for all to enjoy.

An unattended child or vulnerable individual generally is defined as: A child under the age of six (6) who is not accompanied by and not within eyesight of a parent, guardian, or age appropriate, responsible caregiver; and/or any individual who does not know or have the information necessary to contact a parent, guardian, or caregiver if necessary; and/or any individual who appears to need staff assistance beyond typical library services.

- The Library does not have staff, staff training, or state certification to act as a childcare facility or a substitute for trained staff or family for vulnerable individuals.
- The Library Staff is not responsible for the care of unattended children and vulnerable individuals and does not assume responsibility from the caregivers for providing for the welfare of persons in their care.
- Library Staff is not responsible for children or vulnerable individuals interacting with or leaving the Library with persons who are not appropriate caregivers.
- Library Staff is not responsible for any consequences of caregivers forfeiting their responsibilities.
- Library Staff may refer to the appropriate law enforcement those unattended children or vulnerable individuals in the Library at any time when a parent/guardian/caregiver cannot be reached.
- Parents/Legal Guardians with children over the age of five (5) who are deemed mature enough by their parent/legal guardian to be left alone at the Library are expected to set reasonable time limits for their children's visits to the Library and provide a means of transportation home from the Library by the time the Library closes and/or in case of an emergency.
- Parents/Legal Guardians, even in their absence, are legally responsible for their child's behavior (Iowa Code Section 613.16).
- Parents/Guardians/Caregivers are responsible for supervising their child's access to Library materials. Patrons, regardless of age, can select from the entire collection.

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The Library is not responsible for monitoring a child's reading, listening, viewing and internet activity.

### Staff Guidelines

- Staff will attempt to assist an upset unattended child or vulnerable individual.
- Staff will attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or caregiver.
- An incident report may be filled out, given to Library Director, and kept on record.
- Library staff are not permitted to transport children or vulnerable individuals.
- Library staff will encourage minor children to contact parents/guardians/caregivers 15 minutes before closing.
- For safety reasons, appropriate law enforcement authorities may be contacted at any time to take custody of any unattended child or vulnerable individual if attempts to contact parent/guardian/caregiver are unsuccessful.

Approved by the Grimes Public Library Board of Trustees:  
2/03; 7/12; 1/13; 9/15; 11/17 (as Child Safety Policy); 1/22