

Vulnerable Adults Policy

The Middletown Public Library is committed to providing a welcoming and safe environment for all patrons. The library is a public building, with staff trained to provide public library services, including programs and resources offered to make the library enticing to all ages and to encourage a love of reading, offer access to educational resources, and developmentally appropriate programming.

Appropriate library behavior (see "Library Use Policy and Behavior Guidelines") is expected of all library patrons, regardless of age. It is important for everyone to have the appropriate supervision and support to enjoy the library, particularly in regards to the safety of children, as well as vulnerable adults.

Disruptive behavior (as outlined in the "Library Use Policy and Behavior Guidelines") is grounds for being asked to leave the library at the discretion of the library staff. Regardless of age, behavior is considered disruptive when it disturbs the normal use of the library by other patrons, interferes with the staff in the performance of their duties, or endangers the well-being of anyone, including oneself.

A vulnerable adult is defined as:

- An adult who is unable to reasonably care for themselves in an emergency situation. This includes adults who are mentally or physically challenged and who need staff help beyond assistance with normal library services and are not under the direct supervision of a family member, legal guardian, or caregiver.
- An adult not picked up by closing time who is in need of assistance in procuring transportation.

Supervision and Conduct

- Vulnerable adults who can understand and follow the Library Use Policy and Behavior Guidelines and who can care for themselves are welcomed to be in the library unattended. They should have contact information for someone who can assist them in an emergency.
- Adults 18 years of age or older who are functionally, mentally, or physically unable to reasonably care for themselves in an emergency situation should not be left alone or unattended in the library, including at library programs.
- Any adult who is unable to provide for their own personal care needs and/or manage their own behavior without caregiver assistance should not be left in the library without a responsible caregiver.
- Any adult who needs help from staff beyond assistance with normal library services should not be left in the library without a responsible caregiver.
- Library staff may not transport vulnerable adults to any location, even by request of the caregiver.

Safety, Emergencies, and Closing Time

In the event that a staff member has concern for the safety of a vulnerable adult who does not appear to have someone to assist them or has concern for the safety, security, and wellbeing of the general public or library property because of actions by or behavior of a vulnerable adult, the following actions will be taken: staff will attempt to locate a caregiver to advise them of the policy and level of supervision and support required; supervisory staff will be notified and will provide any further follow up, presenting a copy of the written policy. If no such person is available or if the situation warrants immediate action, the police department will be called to assist. In the case of an immediate safety concern, staff will contact 911 immediately and then attempt to contact the caregiver. If a caregiver has not arrived and the library is closing, staff will contact the police at the non-emergency number to take responsibility for the vulnerable adult.

Library staff, the Board of Library Trustees, and the Town of Middletown assume no responsibility for vulnerable adults left unattended at the library or on library property.

Approved by the Middletown Board of Library Trustees on April 15, 2025