

Baraboo Public Library

Youth Safety Policy

Objectives

The Baraboo Public Library is dedicated to providing a safe and welcoming environment for families, children, and teens. 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/guardians are ultimately responsible for the safety and behavior of their youth.

Policy

A. 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 childcare. Children age six or younger are not allowed to be an unaccompanied youth unless the child is participating in a library program, in which case the parents/guardian or caregiver must remain in the building. (See Conduct Policy)

Youth over age six 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, at all times.

Youth with past Library policy violations may be required to be accompanied at all times. Parents/guardians 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
- The youth is unaccompanied as required by the policy

For their safety, all children should know their parents'/guardians' 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. Library staff further reserves the right to contact law enforcement if they believe it is in the best interest of a youth or for the safety of other patrons or staff.

B. Unaccompanied Adults

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

The children's area of the Library is reserved for children, their parents/guardians or caregivers, and adults interested in children's literature, such as teachers and college students. The children's area

includes the picture book area, the play area, and the downstairs reading room. Adults who are unaccompanied by a child or children in the children's area of the Library may be questioned by Library staff, and may be asked to move to another area of the Library.

The teen area is reserved for youth in grades 6 – 12, their parents/guardians or caregivers, and adults interested in teen literature, such as teachers and college students. 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 who are unaccompanied by a teen in the teen area of the Library may be questioned by Library staff, and may be asked to move to another area of the Library.

During school hours and after 6:00 PM, adult groups may use the children's reading room or the teen area with prior permission from Library staff. They must leave the area when school is not in session or when asked to leave by staff. The children's reading room and teen area are not available for adult group use during after-school hours, Saturdays, and all school vacation days without prior permission from Library staff.

C. Computer Use

The public computers located in the children's area are for use by children and teens. Parents/guardian and caregivers may use a downstairs computer when accompanied by their child.

With a valid library card, youth of any age are allowed to use the Library's computers and to 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. Baraboo 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)

D. After Hours

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

E. Staff Transporting Youth

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

F. Policy Enforcement

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

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

Adopted by the Baraboo Public Library Board of Trustees November 19, 2019