



COLUMBIA COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Supervision of Minors and Dependent Adults Policy

Adopted by the Columbia County Library System Board of Trustees

Date of Adoption: 1/6/2026

Effective Date: 1/6/2026

Date of Last Revision: 1/6/2026

I. Definitions

- **Child:** A person younger than 12 years of age.
- **Youth:** A person aged 13 – 17 years of age.
- **Dependent Person:** A person who requires a caregiver for safety or other reasons, including those incapacitated due to physical/mental disabilities or other conditions.
- **Caregiver:** An individual (e.g., parent, legal guardian, or designated temporary guardian) who accepts and acknowledges responsibility for the care, behavior, comfort, and safety of a child, youth, or dependent person while that person is in the library.

II. Welcome and Statement of Responsibility

The Columbia County Library System welcomes all patrons and encourages children and youth to use library resources frequently. The Library Board of Trustees and Staff strive to provide a safe, appropriate, and enjoyable environment for everyone.

Library staff are trained to assist with library materials and services but are not legally permitted to provide supervision or childcare. Caregivers, not library staff, are solely responsible for the safety, behavior, and well-being of the individuals in their care while on library premises.

III. Supervision Requirements

All patrons, regardless of age, are subject to library rules and regulations.

- **Children (under age 10):** Must be actively supervised by a designated caregiver at all times while in the library. If a child attends a library program, the caregiver must remain in the children's area or a designated nearby area throughout the program duration.
- **Children (ages 10-12):** May use the library unsupervised, for up to two hours, provided they adhere to all library policies and rules of conduct.
- **Youth (13 – 17):** May use the library unsupervised, provided they adhere to all library policies and rules of conduct.

IV. Unattended Minors/Dependent Persons and Incidents

The library is a public building and cannot ensure the safety of unattended individuals.

- **Unattended Children (under age 10) or Dependent Persons:** Library staff will attempt to locate the caregiver. If a caregiver cannot be found within a reasonable timeframe, or if an unattended individual appears to be at risk, distressed, or is violating the Library Code of Conduct, staff are obligated to contact the appropriate authorities, such as law enforcement or child protective services.
- **After Hours:** The library is not responsible for individuals left at the library after closing. Law enforcement will be contacted if a minor or dependent person is not picked up at closing time.