



## CITY OF RIO RANCHO ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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### **Library Child and Vulnerable Adult Safety Policy**

Chapter: 1
Article: 13
Effective: April 11, 2023

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#### **Section**

1-13-1 Title  
1-13-2 Policy

#### **1-13-1 Title**

This article may be cited as the Child and Vulnerable Adult Safety Policy.

#### **1-13-2 Policy**

The City of Rio Rancho Department of Libraries and Information Services manages the City of Rio Rancho's public library buildings (individually a, "Library" and collectively, the "Libraries"), which are open to the local community and the public at large. Library staff strive to ensure that all Libraries in the City of Rio Rancho are safe and welcoming places for all patrons. Because the Libraries are open to all, they cannot be considered safe places for unattended children and vulnerable adults.

Parents, caregivers, and legal guardians are responsible for the safety and behavior of their children and vulnerable adults in their care at all times in a Library. Library staff cannot serve as substitutes for parents or serve "in loco parentis" in any capacity. Library staff cannot provide care or assume responsibility for the safety of children or vulnerable adults left unattended in a Library. Library staff are not responsible to determine whether an individual is a child's or vulnerable adult's custodial parent, legally authorized caregiver, or legal guardian.

The Department's policy is as follows:

#### *Children*

- Children 11 years of age and under must be continually accompanied by a parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver in the Library. A parent, guardian or responsible caregiver must remain in the Library with the child at all times. If Library staff encounter an unaccompanied child age 11 years of age or younger in a Library, staff will try to identify and locate the parent, guardian or responsible caregiver to remedy the situation. If Library staff cannot identify or contact an unaccompanied child's parent, guardian or responsible caregiver, staff shall contact immediately law enforcement and report the matter.
- Children ages 12 years and older may use a Library without a parent, guardian or

responsible caregiver present, provided their behavior conforms to the Rio Rancho Public Libraries' Policies.

- All Library visitors shall comply with Rio Rancho Public Libraries' Policies. Any person who fails to comply with behavioral rules as outlined in the Rio Rancho Libraries' Policies shall be subject to the same consequences as all other Library users, including being required to leave a Library.
- Staff shall not physically detain a child who chooses to leave the Library.

#### *Children's Programs*

- When attending Library programs, children 7-11 years of age may be dropped off at the program location inside the Library if their parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver remains physically present in the Library throughout the duration of the program. Their parent or caregiver must pick up the participating child at the program location inside of the Library when the program ends.
- All are welcome and encouraged to participate in the programs offered at the Libraries and all participants are subject to Rio Rancho Public Libraries' Policies.
- Adults ages 18 years of age and up who are no longer high school students may not attend programs advertised for children 12 years of age and up.

#### *Vulnerable Adults*

- A vulnerable adult is a person 18 years of age and older who is functionally, mentally, or physically unable to provide self-care or be independent without close supervision, direct care, or protection. This includes adults who need staff help beyond assistance with normal library services and/or cannot manage their behavior without aid ("Vulnerable Adults").
- All Library visitors shall comply with Rio Rancho Public Libraries' Policies.
- Library staff cannot physical detain any Vulnerable Adult who chooses to leave a Library.

#### *Unattended Children and/or Vulnerable Adults at Closing*

- It may be necessary for a Library to close, without prior notice, due to unexpected or emergency circumstances. Unaccompanied children 17 years of age and younger who cannot transport themselves must be able to reach a parent, guardian or responsible caregiver for immediate pick-up.
- If staff encounter an unattended child or Vulnerable Adult at a Library after the Library closes and there is not an immediate safety concern, staff shall first attempt to identify and contact a parent, guardian or responsible caregiver.
- If an unattended child's or Vulnerable Adult's parent, guardian or responsible caregiver cannot be identified or contacted, staff shall immediately contact law enforcement to report the matter.
- After contacting law enforcement to report an unattended child or Vulnerable Adult, staff shall wait with the unattended child or Vulnerable Adult until law enforcement arrives to assume responsibility for the unattended child or Vulnerable Adult.
- Staff shall not transport an unattended child or Vulnerable Adult anywhere from a Library where staff encountered the unattended child or Vulnerable Adult.

APPROVED THIS 11<sup>th</sup> DAY OF APRIL, 2023

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew B. Geisel", written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and extends to the right of the line.

Matthew B. Geisel, City Manager