

Safe Child and Vulnerable Adults Policy

All patrons of Dyer Library and Saco Museum are expected to follow appropriate behavior guidelines as described in the Library and Museum Use Policy. Children and vulnerable adults must have proper supervision and support to ensure a safe and positive experience. This policy outlines the expectations and procedures that help maintain safety within our facilities. Disruptive or unsafe behavior that interferes with others' enjoyment, hinders staff in performing their duties, or poses a risk to anyone's safety may result in being asked to leave the premises.

Definitions

An *unattended child* is defined as:

- A child under ten (10) years of age who is not accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or responsible caregiver aged sixteen (16) or older.
- A child between ten (10) and sixteen (16) years of age who remains at the library or museum after closing and requires assistance to arrange transportation.
- A child under eighteen (18) who appears to need staff help beyond normal library or museum services and is not accompanied by a parent, guardian, or caregiver at least sixteen (16) years old.

A *vulnerable adult* is defined as:

- An individual unable to reasonably care for themselves in an emergency, including those with mental, physical, or emotional challenges who require assistance beyond standard public service and who are not accompanied by a responsible caregiver.
- An adult who remains on-site after closing and needs help arranging transportation.

Safe Child Policy

Children of all ages are welcome to enjoy programs, explore materials, and participate in activities at Dyer Library and Saco Museum. Parents and caregivers are asked to work with staff to ensure a safe and positive experience for all visitors by following the guidelines in this policy.

Dyer Library and Saco Museum are public spaces, not childcare or school facilities. Staff do not act "in loco parentis" (in place of a parent) and cannot supervise unattended children as teachers or child care providers would. The library and museum are not suitable places for children to spend extended unsupervised time, including after school while waiting for transportation.

If a parent or caregiver does not wish their child to leave the building unattended, the child should not be left alone. If a child is too young to remain home alone, they are also too young to be left unattended in the library or museum. Responsibility for a child's safety and behavior always rests with the parent or caregiver, both inside and outside the facility.

Staff do not monitor who enters or exits the building, nor do they monitor the arrival or departure of children from programs. For safety and privacy reasons, staff will not confirm a person's presence in the building over the phone or locate a patron at the request of a caller. Exceptions may be made in emergencies at staff discretion. Parents should make communication arrangements with their children before their visit.

All minors should have a parent or caregiver's phone number readily available in case of emergency. If a child is left unattended, not picked up on time, or involved in an incident where the parent cannot be reached, staff will document and mail a letter to the caregiver to emphasize the importance of appropriate supervision.

Staff may not transport children under any circumstances.

Levels of Supervision Required

Age of Child	Supervision Requirements
Under 6	Must be directly supervised by a parent or responsible caregiver aged 16 or older at all times.
Ages 6–9	May use the children's area while the parent or caregiver remains in the building. Caregivers should accompany children to programs unless otherwise noted.
Ages 10 and up	May use the facility independently if they can follow library/museum rules and behave appropriately. Children are subject to all behavior policies and may be asked to leave if disruptive.

Vulnerable Adults Policy

Vulnerable adults who can care for themselves and follow the General Use Policy are welcome to use the library and museum independently. They should carry contact information for someone who can assist them if needed.

Adults unable to manage personal care or behavior, or who need more assistance than staff can provide as part of normal service, should not be left unattended. Caregivers are expected to remain within the visual range of vulnerable adults who require such supervision.

If a vulnerable adult is left alone, staff will make reasonable efforts to locate or contact their caregiver. Staff may contact emergency services if necessary. Staff may not transport vulnerable adults.

At Closing

Ten minutes before closing, staff will identify any unattended children or vulnerable adults and attempt to contact their caregivers. If no caregiver arrives by closing, or if the person cannot safely leave on their own, staff will contact the Saco Police Department's non-emergency number. Staff will remain with the individual until help arrives.