

## **Starr Library**

# **VULNERABLE ADULT POLICY & GUIDELINES**

### **Purpose Statement**

This policy aims to ensure the safety, dignity, and appropriate support of vulnerable adults using library facilities while promoting inclusive access to library services. A vulnerable adult is defined as an individual aged 18 or older who may be unable to care for themselves independently or protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to physical disabilities, mental health conditions, cognitive impairments, or other circumstances that significantly limit their capacity for self-care or independent decision-making.

### **General Guidelines**

#### *Supervision Requirements*

- Vulnerable adults who cannot care for themselves must be accompanied by a caregiver.
- Caregivers must remain in the building and be actively attentive to their charge.
- Library staff cannot act as caregivers or assume responsibility for vulnerable adults.
- Caregivers should identify themselves, inform staff that they are accompanying a vulnerable adult and provide emergency contact information to library staff.
- Library staff may ask for emergency contact information.

#### *Caregiver Responsibilities*

- Assist with personal care needs
- Monitor behavior and ensure compliance with library policies
- Handle any medical or personal emergencies
- Ensure safe transportation to and from the library
- Remain accessible by phone if temporarily absent, provide contact information if asked
- Ensure prompt pickup before closing time

### **Access to Services**

#### *Library Card Registration*

- Modified registration procedures available when needed
- Caregivers may be authorized on library accounts
- Special borrowing privileges may be arranged
- Documentation requirements may be adjusted based on individual circumstances

#### *Accommodations*

- Staff will make reasonable accommodations for access to materials and services
- Assistive technologies will be made available when possible
- Extended checkout periods may be granted
- Home delivery services may be available for qualifying individuals

## **Safety Procedures**

### *Emergency Situations*

- Staff will attempt to contact caregivers if:
  1. A vulnerable adult appears distressed
  2. Medical attention may be needed
  3. Behavior becomes disruptive
  4. The individual is alone at closing time
- If no contact can be made, staff will:
  1. Assess immediate needs
  2. Contact emergency services if necessary
  3. Document the incident
  4. Follow up with caregivers

### *Closing Time Procedures*

- Vulnerable adults requiring assistance must be picked up 15 minutes before closing
- Law enforcement may be contacted as a last resort

## **Staff Guidelines**

### *Staff Responsibilities*

- Treat all patrons with dignity and respect
- Provide assistance within professional boundaries
- Document and report concerns appropriately
- Maintain confidentiality while ensuring safety
- Direct caregivers to appropriate community resources

### *Staff Limitations*

Staff cannot:

- Provide personal care or medical assistance
- Administer medication
- Transport vulnerable adults
- Sign legal documents
- Make decisions on behalf of vulnerable adults
- Provide food or money
- Take custody of personal belongings

# Incident Response

## *Documentation Requirements*

- All incidents involving vulnerable adults must be logged
- Include date, time, description, and actions taken
- Note any witness statements
- Record caregiver contact attempts
- File incident reports when appropriate

## *Follow-up Procedures*

- Review incidents with library management
- Contact caregivers to discuss concerns
- Connect with social services when necessary
- Evaluate need for policy modifications
- Document resolution and outcomes

*Adopted by The Starr Library Board of Trustees: February 27, 2025*

## **Procedural Considerations:**

### **Community Partnerships**

- Maintain relationships with adult protective services
- Coordinate with local social service agencies
- Partner with disability advocacy organizations
- Develop referral networks for additional services
- Participate in community outreach programs

### **Training and Implementation**

- Staff training on working with vulnerable adults
- Regular policy review and updates
- Clear communication with caregivers
- Posted policies and procedures
- Annual evaluation of effectiveness

### **Legal Compliance**

- Adherence to ADA requirements
- Compliance with state adult protection laws
- Regular review by legal counsel
- Documentation of reasonable accommodations
- Protection of privacy rights