



## Use of the Library by Minors

Pitkin County Library hosts many programs designed to serve children and youth under the age of 18 (hereinafter referred to as Minors), including but not limited to story times, after-school programs, and summer reading activities. Employees and volunteers associated with these programs who are reasonably anticipated to have direct contact or interaction with minor program participants must be appropriately pre-screened by Pitkin County Human Resources and trained by Library staff. The Head of Youth Services is responsible for ensuring that all program staff, paid or unpaid, including but not limited to Library staff and volunteers 18 years and older who work directly with Minors, have successfully completed a criminal background check with Pitkin County Human Resources, to be rescreened as appropriate.

### Safe Comfortable Environment

The Children and Teen areas of the Library are specifically designed to serve the needs of young patrons. Adults in the Children's area not accompanying a child may be asked to use another part of the Library. Parents and caregivers are responsible for monitoring & regulating the behavior of their children. When Library staff determines that a child is at risk/vulnerable or disruptive, they will attempt to contact the parent or caregiver. In the event that the parent or caregiver cannot be reached, the child will be placed in the care of the local police department. All decisions are based on the informed judgment of Library staff.

### Materials & Resources

The Library offers many programs & services that encourage children to develop a love of books, reading, and learning. Library staff are always available to lead young people to interesting materials selected with the children's interests in mind. Parents and caregivers are reminded that they are responsible for supervising their children's access to Library materials and resources, including the Internet. It will be assumed that children who visit the Library unattended are authorized to use the full range of materials available to our patrons. Colorado State law protects the privacy of all individuals while visiting the Library. The Library will not monitor or share what materials children have checked out, or what they do while in the Library, except in accordance with Colorado State law.

### Programs & Supervision

The Library is not equipped to provide long- or short-term child care. Parents and caregivers are reminded that unattended children may be at risk in any public place, including the Pitkin County Library. The responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children using Pitkin County Library facilities (including all indoor, outdoor, and off-site program settings) rests with the parent/guardian or caregiver. Parents/guardians and caregivers should be aware of library openings, closings, and program times so they can make suitable arrangements to meet and/or transport their child(ren). Library staff will not transport children home under any circumstances and are not responsible for children traveling from school to the Library.

## **Staff Interactions with Minors**

The Library values its programs that involve children and youth. The safety and welfare of Minors who visit our Library and participate in our programs are always of paramount importance. Employees and volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional state of all Minors each time they report for a program. Any signs of injury relating to suspected child abuse should be reported to the appropriate authorities. Library staff are trained in recognizing signs of abuse.

All employees and others acting on behalf of Pitkin County Library are required by this policy to report actual or suspected abuse or other improper conduct involving a Minor. When suspected child abuse is observed or reported, a supervisor must be informed, and that person must contact the Colorado State Hotline (1-844-CO-4-KIDS or 1-844-264-5437) to consult and determine next steps and to ensure that a report is made to the correct county agency, human services, or law enforcement. If one suspects an immediate threat of danger or other emergency situation, staff should call 911. All are expected to cooperate with authorities as needed.

At no time may a staff member be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others. Staff will not communicate with Minors through email, text messages, social networking websites, or other forms of social media unless there is an educational or programmatic purpose and the content of the communications is consistent with the Library's mission.