Patron Code of Conduct & Patron Responsibilities,  
Child Safety, Disruptive Behavior, Unattended Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy

*Adopted: November 21, 2023*

The Kinderhook Memorial Library serves all residents of the community and the Mid-Hudson Library System without charge. Service will not be denied or abridged because of religious, racial, social, economic or political status; mental, emotional, or physical condition; age; sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Patron Code of Conduct & Patron Responsibilities:**

The use of the Library may be denied for due cause. Such cause may be destruction of Library property; disturbance of other patrons; or any other disruptive, objectionable, or illegal conduct on Library premises. It is a patron’s responsibility to maintain necessary and proper standards of behavior in order to protect their individual rights and privileges and the rights and privileges of other patrons. If a patron creates a nuisance, that patron may be restricted from entering the Library and from the use of the Library’s facilities. Those who are unwilling to leave or do not leave within a reasonable amount of time after being instructed to do so by staff, will be considered to be trespassing and subject to such penalties as may be legally imposed.

In order to ensure constructive use of the Kinderhook Memorial Library facilities, materials and services, as well as the personal comfort of all patrons, the Board of Trustees has established the following rules for use:

- Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public library while in the building.
- Reasonable quiet is expected; no patron may disturb others using the Library. Patrons are encouraged to report disruptive individuals to the staff.
- Misconduct such as: the use of foul or threatening language or gestures; public drunkenness or drug usage; sale or exchange of alcohol or drugs; persistent loud talking or laughing; running, pushing, or fighting; and other disruptive, offensive, or illegal behavior may result in expulsion from the premises and suspension of Library privileges.
- Smoking is not permitted on Library property.
- Only service dogs are permitted in the building.
- Patrons shall not be permitted to enter the building without footwear or without a shirt or other covering of their upper bodies.
- A patron who deliberately alters a Library computer or database or damages computer equipment will forfeit all Library privileges and will be financially liable for damages and may be subject to further legal penalties.
- A patron who vandalizes, steals, or destroys any Library materials, equipment or building components will forfeit all Library privileges and will be financially liable for damages and may be subject to further legal penalties.
Patrons shall comply with all rules and regulations established by New York State, Columbia County, the Town or Village of Kinderhook, and the Library. During periods of public health emergencies or a declared epidemic or pandemic, patrons must wear a face mask, if it is mandated, that covers the nose and mouth while inside the Library or on Library grounds. These rules will be prominently displayed at all library entrances.

**Patron concerns should be brought to the attention of the library staff.**

**Child Safety, Disruptive Behavior & Unattended Children:**

The Kinderhook Memorial Library welcomes children of all ages to use its facilities, services and resources. In an effort to provide a Library environment that allows all patrons to utilize Library materials and information sources in a safe and relaxed manner, the Library Board of Trustees has adopted a policy statement concerning child safety, disruptive or unattended children.

**Child Safety:**

Children and their safety are of great concern to our Library. To ensure the safety of young children we affirm the caregiver's responsibility for their children’s safety while utilizing our Library, while on our grounds or while attending off-site Library sponsored programs. Library staff do not assume responsibility for the care of unsupervised children and the Library is not responsible for any consequences of a caregiver's failure to perform duties owed to such unsupervised children.

Therefore, it is a Library policy that all children under the age of ten must be accompanied and supervised by a caregiver while in the Library, on Library grounds or at off-site Library sponsored programs. Also, if a child less than 10 years of age attends a Library program, we require a caregiver to remain in the Library, on Library grounds or at an off-site Library sponsored program throughout the program unless otherwise noted in the description of the program.

**Disruptive Behavior:**

Children, like all library patrons, are expected to behave appropriately. Children and young people who are disruptive in the Library, on Library grounds or at off-site Library programs interfere with Library service to all patrons. Caregivers, not library staff, are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children in the Library, on Library grounds or at off-site Library programs.

**Unattended Children:**

Libraries are public place where the possibility of unattended children being approached by an adult is a real concern. Library staff cannot prevent children from interacting with or leaving the Library, Library grounds or an off-site Library sponsored program with a person or persons who are not their caregivers.

Therefore, caregivers may not leave children under the age of ten years unattended in the Library. If a child under the age of ten is left unattended in the Library, on Library grounds or an off-site Library sponsored program, the staff will attempt to locate the child's caregiver. Staff members are
not permitted to remain after hours with an unattended child nor to give the child a ride home. For the safety of the child, the staff will not leave a child under the age of ten outside to wait for a ride. If a caregiver cannot be reached in a reasonable amount of time before the library closes, the New York State Police will be called to escort the child home or keep the child until parents can be reached.

**Vulnerable Adults: (Draft)**

A “vulnerable adult” is defined for purposes of this policy as: an individual over the age of 18 who is mentally or physically challenged to a degree that significantly impairs such individual’s ability to provide adequately for their own care or manage their own behavior without assistance so that such person requires another individual over the age 18 to act as that person’s caregiver.

The safety of vulnerable adults, as with all patrons, is of great concern to our Library. Specifically, to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults, the Library relies upon and affirms the vulnerable adult’s caregiver's responsibility for the safety of the person for whom that caregiver is responsible while utilizing our Library, while on Library grounds or while attending off-site Library sponsored programs. Library staff do not assume responsibility for the care of unsupervised vulnerable adults and the Library is not responsible for any consequences of a caregiver’s failure to perform duties owed to the vulnerable adult.

**Where there is a designated caregiver:**

Therefore, it is a Library policy that vulnerable adults, who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves, must be accompanied and supervised by a caregiver 18 years or older while in the Library, on its grounds or at an off-site program. Therefore, the Library requires the caregiver to remain with the vulnerable adult while in the Library, on Library grounds or at an off-site Library sponsored program, unless otherwise noted in the description of the event or program.

**Where there is no designated caregiver:**

If a vulnerable adult can understand and follow the rules of conduct and can provide for and care for themself while in the Library, during a program or event, that person can enter in, remain upon and utilize the Library, its grounds or an off-site Library sponsored program, unattended by a caregiver and should have contact information for a caregiver who can assist them in an emergency. The rules for unattended vulnerable adults at closing time shall be the same as the rules for an unattended child.