



Hobbs Public Library
HOBBS, NM

SAFE CHILD POLICY

The Hobbs Public Library welcomes children and nurtures their love of reading and learning. We hope that by visiting the Library and using the resources we offer, children can foster their curiosity in a controlled environment. The well-being of the children who visit the Library is a serious concern for the Library staff and this policy is intended to help us to ensure children's safety at all times.

DEFINITIONS:

- *Vulnerable Adult:* A person over the age of 18 who is functionally, mentally, or physically unable to provide self-care or able to be independent without close supervision, direct care or protection.
- *Child:* A person under the age of 12, who lacks the maturity to follow Library rules and the Behavior Policy without assistance from a parent or other caregiver.

CHILDREN'S RESPONSIBILITY:

- Children are expected to abide by the guidelines stated in the Library's Behavior Policy, including the listed consequences for not following the rules. If a child cannot follow the Behavior Policy, a parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver will be expected to enforce it and will be held accountable for their child's behavior.
- Only children age 12 and above, who are mature enough to understand the purpose of the Library and are capable of following the rules and behavioral expectations may visit the Library without a parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver.
- Children or vulnerable adults who visit the Library unattended should know the phone number to reach either a parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver, or be able to leave the Library premises independently.
- If the Library must close unexpectedly, unattended children or vulnerable adults who cannot transport themselves must be able to reach a parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver for immediate pick-up. Library staff are not permitted to transport an unattended child or vulnerable adult. If a responsible party cannot be contacted, law enforcement will be called.
- Children will not be allowed to use the Library in an unsafe manner, including running, climbing on stair railings or shelves, climbing or jumping on furniture, or playing in the elevator. Running and climbing in the outdoor courtyard is also not allowed.



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GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITY:

- Caregivers are responsible for ensuring that children behave appropriately in the Library. Library staff may require a child to leave, or be accompanied by a responsible adult, caregiver or guardian if behavior becomes unsafe, disruptive, or otherwise inappropriate. Prior permission to visit the Library independently does not guarantee that the child may continue to visit the Library alone.
- The Library is not an alternative for daycare. Parents, guardians and caregivers remain responsible for providing supervision; Library staff cannot assume adult supervision for vulnerable adults or children.
- Parents/guardians must promptly pick up their child at the program location, or location designated by the parent/guardian. Library staff are not responsible for monitoring children after a program ends.
- Parents, guardians and responsible caregivers should be aware of the Library's hours. The Library is not responsible for unaccompanied children or vulnerable adults before opening or after closing. The Library is not responsible for children or vulnerable adults outside the Library building at any time.
- Responsible adults, caregivers and guardians should be able to provide transportation if it becomes necessary for the Library to close unexpectedly. If a responsible party cannot be reached, law enforcement will be called.
- The children's area of the Library is for children, their parents, guardians, teachers and others working with children. Adults in the children's area who are not accompanied by a child/children may be questioned by staff and may be asked to move to another area of the Library.



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LIBRARY RESPONSIBILITY:

- Library staff are not permitted to transport an unattended child or vulnerable adult.
- Library staff may not detain any vulnerable adults or children who choose to leave the Library.
- Library staff members have specific job duties to perform and cannot monitor the behavior or whereabouts of individual children. Responsibility for the safety and behavior of children lies with their parents or guardians, both within the Library and on Library grounds.
- If there are concerns about an unattended child or vulnerable adult, staff will first attempt to locate a parent, guardian, or caregiver. If a responsible adult cannot be located, staff may contact law enforcement or other agencies to assist in locating a responsible party. Staff will act to prioritize the safety of those within the Library even when doing so limits individual privacy.

Library patrons, including children and vulnerable adults, are expected to behave in a civil, respectful and non-disruptive manner at all times. Library staff have the authority to address any behavior not specifically listed here or in the Behavior Policy. Enforcing this policy helps ensure the safety of the children who use this facility, which is our highest priority.

Adopted by the Hobbs Public Library Board
APPROVED: March 4, 2026