



Policy Section:	Operational		
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Purpose

The Bradford West Gwillimbury Public Library is committed to providing a welcoming, respectful, supportive, and safe environment for children of all ages. Notwithstanding, the Library does not assume responsibility for the supervision of unattended children.

This policy establishes expectations for families and caregivers and outlines staff responsibilities to help safeguard the well-being of children while on Library premises.

Section 1:

Responsibilities of the Parent/Guardian or Caregiver

In accordance with the [Child, Youth and Family Services Act \(CYFSA\)](#), no person having charge of a child younger than sixteen (16) shall leave the child without making reasonable provision for the child's supervision and care in the circumstances.

Children from nine (9) years of age and younger must be accompanied by a family member or caregiver who is at least thirteen (13) years of age. Children ten (10) years of age and older may use the library independently. However, families and caregivers remain responsible for their child's behaviour and well-being.

The Library expects families and caregivers to:

1. Supervise their children while in or about Library premises;
2. Monitor their children's use of services and collections;
3. Monitor their children's use of computers and Internet access;

4. Be responsible for materials borrowed and charges incurred by children in their care; and
5. Ensure children in their care behave appropriately and in accordance with Library policies.

These guidelines may be interpreted with consideration of the child's developmental needs, the length of time unattended, and the ability of the child and caregiver to remain in contact without staff intervention.

Section 2:

Supervision of Children in Programs

1. Family members or caregivers must attend programs for children three (3) years of age and younger;
2. For programs intended for children four (4) to nine (9) years of age, family members or caregivers are not required to attend the program but must remain within the building; and
3. For certain programs, staff may require caregiver attendance as a condition of participation.

Section 3:

Responsibilities of Library Staff

In most circumstances, the health and safety of children, particularly older children and teens, is not a concern. However, staff will intervene as necessary or appropriate, including in circumstances such as:

1. An unattended child who appears frightened, distressed or crying;
2. An unattended child who appears to be at risk of harm or endangering themselves;
3. A situation in which another person appears to pose a risk to a child;
4. An unattended child engaging in inappropriate or disruptive behaviour;
5. A child not met by a responsible caregiver at closing time; and/or
6. A child left alone in the Library for extended periods.

If staff determine that reasonable supervision has not been provided, they will attempt to contact the family or caregiver.

If a responsible adult cannot be reached within a reasonable period, staff will notify the CEO or designate and contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) or South Simcoe Police Service (SSPS), as appropriate.

Staff will remain with the child until the child is released to a family member, caregiver, or appropriate authority. Staff will not transport a child or teen from Library premises.

Section 4:

Duty to Report

The CYFSA establishes a mandatory duty to report when there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may need protection.

1. The duty to report applies to any child who is, or appears to be, under sixteen (16) years of age;
2. It also applies to children who are sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) years of age and subject to a child protection order; and
3. When staff have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child may require protection, they will advise the senior person in charge and together report the concern and the supporting information to the local CAS or SSPS.

Related Documents:

[Child, Youth and Family Services Act \(CYFSA\)](#). S.O. 2017

[Ontario Library Association's Position on Children's Rights in the Public Library](#). Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting in November 1998.