



Unattended Children Policy

Statement of Purpose

The Perth East Public Library is a busy public place and library staff cannot assume responsibility for children left unattended within our public facility. The following policy establishes the conditions needed to maintain the well-being of children and the responsibilities of their caregivers.

Section 1: Responsibilities of the Parent or Caregiver

1. Responsibility for the welfare and the behaviour of children using the library ultimately rests with the parent/guardian or an assigned caregiver.
2. The library is governed by the terms in the *Ontario Child and Family Services Act, RSO 1990, c.C11 s.79(3), 79(4)*.
 - a. Section 79(3) “No person having charge of a child less than 16 years of age shall leave the child without making provision for his or her supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances.”
 - b. Section 79(4) “Where a person is charged with contravening Subsection (3) and the child is less than 10 years of age, the onus of establishing that the person made provision for the child’s supervision and care that was reasonable in the circumstances rests with the person.”
3. The library expects parents, caregivers and teachers to:
 - a. Not leave children requiring supervision unattended in or about library premises.
 - b. Be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care.
 - c. Monitor the use of services and collections by children under their care.
 - d. Be responsible for borrowed materials and fines incurred by children under their care.
 - e. Monitor the use of the internet/Wi-Fi by children under their care. The library is not responsible for enforcing any restrictions the parent/guardian may place on a minor’s use of the library’s internet/Wi-Fi.
4. Children 10 years of age and younger must be accompanied by an adult while in the library. Parental/caregiver accompaniment for programs will be assessed on a per program basis.
5. Children under the age of 5 attending programs may be supervised by the library staff only during the scheduled time of the program; their caregivers must always remain in the library building.

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Section 2: Responsibility of Staff

1. The library staff members will be guided by this policy in situations, where
 - a. An unattended child is found frightened or crying in the library
 - b. An unattended child exhibits specific inappropriate behaviour
 - c. An unattended child is perceived to be endangering him/herself
 - d. Another person in the library poses a perceived threat to the unattended child
 - e. An unattended child is not met by a responsible caregiver at closing time
 - f. A child is consistently left on his or her own in the library for long periods of time
2. Where a responsible adult cannot be contacted, library staff will:
 - a. Not leave a child unattended at closing time
 - b. Not give the child a ride home
 - c. Contact local police or Children's Aid Society (CAS)
 - d. Remain with the child until the proper authorities can take the child into their protection.

Section 3: Duty to Report

1. The CFSA recognizes that each of us has a responsibility for the welfare of children. It clearly states that members of the public including professionals who work with children, have an obligation to report promptly to CAS if they suspect that a child or youth under the age of 16 is or may be in need of protection.
2. The duty to report applies to any child who is, or appears to be, under the age of 16 years. It also applies to children subject to a child protection order who are 16 and 17 years old.
3. When library staff members have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, they will advise the CEO (or senior staff) and together they will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the local CAS, as stated in the CFSA s. 2 (1)

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