



Hastings Highlands Public Library

Area: Operational
Policy Title: Youth Services
Policy Number: OP-10

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Hastings Highlands Public Library recognizes that the needs of young people are important in their own right: that their intellectual growth, their cultural appreciation, and recreational activities should be fostered through quality library service, delivered with consideration and respect. This policy sets out the services to be offered for children and teens.

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND TEENS

Hastings Highlands Public Library endeavours to provide this service based on the principles stated in the Ontario Library Association's Children's Rights in the Public Library, 1988 (See Appendix A) and in the Ontario Library Associations Teen Rights in the Public Library, 2010 (See Appendix B).

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy the term child or children refers to child:

Child: 0 to 9 years of age
Tween: 10 to 12 years of age
Teen: 13 to 19 years of age

SCOPE

The services described in this policy are intended to meet the needs of children and teens, as well as parents, guardians, caregivers, and adults who work with children or are interested in children's literature.

SERVICES

Membership: Any children from birth forward, who live or study in the Municipality of Hastings Highlands, are eligible for a Hastings Highlands Public Library card. Parents or guardians may apply on behalf of their child, up to and including the age of 13. Once the user is in high school and can provide his/her own identification, he/she may apply without parental consent. Any child with or without a library card may use the services and collections within the Hastings Highlands Public Library facility.

Collections: The Library provides a wide range of materials in all formats and reading levels to fulfill the informational, cultural, learning, and leisure needs of children and teens:

1. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO/Chief Librarian) will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive children's and Young Adult (YA) collection based on the Collection Development Policy.
 - a. Evaluating and weeding the collections on an on-going basis.
 - b. Ensuring that adequate funds be made available to build a collection that is current, attractive and broad in scope.
2. The children's and teens' collections will meet high standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of children and teens as well as trends in society.
3. The staff will develop profiles of the collections to define the scope and to address the issues of:

- a. Canadian authors and bilingual and multicultural content
- b. Award-winning titles
- c. Non-fiction material that complement the local school curriculum
- d. Age appropriate formats

Information Services and Readers Advisory: Library staff working with children and teens connect them with the materials they require.

1. The qualified staff will utilize the full range of collections, technology, and methods to answer all users' requests for advice on selecting books and for information, regardless of age and without judgment, with confidentiality and respect.
2. Library staff should conduct reference interviews to better understand what each child and teen wants and needs. The reference interview is an opportunity to assist children and teens in the development of information and research skills.
3. Library staff will point out the variety of resources available in all areas of the library as appropriate.
4. While Library staff will assist a young person in finding materials, they do not act in place of a parent, guardian, or caregiver. Parents, guardians, or caregivers are responsible for supervising all aspects of their own children's library use.
5. The Library offers free internet access to children and teens in accordance with the established Board approved Computer & Internet Use Policy.

Programs: The Library will provide programming for children, teens, parents, guardians, and caregivers, both in and out of the Library, to stimulate creative potential and to encourage and facilitate the habit of reading, independent learning, and use of the Library.

1. The Library will provide educational, entertaining, and literature-related programs and support for children and teens, such as:
 - I. Programs for parents, guardians, adults, and caregivers that will educate them on the importance of early literacy, the role of the Library in their children's lives, and the support the Library can offer them

II. Programs for classes, children's groups (Brownies), daycare, etc., depending on age, will emphasize early literacy and library orientation and encourage reading for leisure, or highlight various aspects of the collection.

III. Programs for summer, school breaks, and professional development days will be primarily book-based and will highlight various aspects of our collection while encouraging reading for pleasure or leisure activities.

2. The staff will actively involve teens in planning and implementing programs for this age group.

3. The number of participants for all programs will be restricted based on size of the facility, fire department limits, staff supervision available, etc.; the children's programmer in charge will enforce this.

4. Some programs may limit the age of children or teens and the number of children per accompanying adult. This limit may be enforced by the staff as the program is designed for maximum benefit to the child/parent/guardian through one on one interaction. Leniency is given to parents, guardians, or caregivers of more than one child.

TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY

The Library provides children and teens with the opportunity to learn and develop technological literacy skills.

1. Computer literacy workstations are specifically designed for children in terms of content and accessible language.

2. The Creativity & Exploration Hub provides computers, software, equipment, and training opportunities.

3. Computer programs are available for children of all ages.

LIBRARY SPACE

The Library will provide well-planned areas for children that are distinct from the adult area.

1. These areas should be visually stimulating so that children are able to readily distinguish their own space from the rest of the Library.

2. These areas will have furniture, shelves, and equipment that are designed for and accessible to all children.

3. The Library will ensure that signage is clear and age appropriate.

4. The children's area is an interactive learning environment where controlled noise levels are tolerated and where young users are invited to explore the Library materials and services in their own way.

STAFFING

The Library provides trained staff that have a rapport with and understanding of children and teens:

1. The Board will support a program of ongoing staff training and professional development in children's and teens' services.

2. The CEO will ensure that all staff members assigned to children's and teens' services receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable library service.

3. While Library staff will assist young people with finding materials, using the Internet, or attending programs, they do not act “in loco parentis”. Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for their children’s use of the Library.

NOISE LEVELS AND CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR

The Youth Services Policy on noise levels and conduct of behaviour is an adjunct policy to the Hastings Highlands Public Library Board’s current Code of Conduct Policy.

1. Parents, guardians, or caregivers are responsible for the behaviour of their children while in the Library.
2. Library staff will stop a child (or adult) from a behaviour if:
 - a. It affects the enjoyment of the Library for others;
 - b. It disrupts a programme;
 - c. It presents a dangerous situation for that customer, any other customer, or staff; or
 - d. It affects Library equipment or a Library facility.
3. When the staff member stops behaviour, he/she will explain why the behaviour is not acceptable.
4. If a staff member’s attempts to correct the situation are unsuccessful, he/she is to confer with the CEO/Chief Librarian or in his/her absence, the senior staff member in attendance.

UNATTENDED CHILDREN

The Library is a public place, and parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for their children’s supervision at all times. According to the Ontario Child and Family Services Act, children under 16 must never be left without "provision made for their supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances".

When an unaccompanied child is found in the Library, and if the parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be located, staff may contact the Children's Aid Society (CAS) or the OPP REPORTING CHILD ABUSE / NEGLECT. The entire staff of the Hastings Highlands Public Library, as members of society, as members of the public and as professionals who work with children, is obligated under the Ontario Child and Family Services Act to report suspicions of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of children under the age of 16. The reporting must be done promptly and immediately by the individual who witnesses or suspects that a child has experienced harm or is at risk of being harmed.

ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

The Library will advocate for children’s and teens’ services in the community by:

1. Collaborating with agencies to promote early literacy, love of reading, lifelong learning, and children’s and teens’ health and well-being.
2. Seeking support for children’s and teens’ services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc.
3. Networking with other agencies who provide service to children and teens in the community, region, and province.
4. Communicating with principals, teacher librarians, and teachers in the community.
5. Promoting the children’s and teens’ services and collections to groups who could benefit from them (schools, daycares, etc.).

6. Welcoming class visits and orientation for school children and home-schooled children.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

Children have the right to intellectual freedom and are entitled to open access to all information and services throughout the Library.

1. All children will have equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users.

2. The full range of qualified staff skills, collections, equipment, and methods will be utilized to answer all customer requests, regardless of age.

3. In accordance with the 1998 Ontario Library Association's Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual, staff will not censor material. This is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or caregiver.

4. All children's requests will be answered without judgment, with confidentiality, and with respect.

5. While Library staff will assist a young person in finding materials, they do not act in place of a parent. Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for supervising all aspects of their own children's Library use.