



Hastings Highlands Public Library

Area: Operational
Policy Title: Children in the Library
Policy Number: OP-11

Initial Policy Approval Date: December 9, 2014
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Year of next review: 2025

The Hastings Highlands Public Library welcomes children. Library staff recognizes that children of all ages have a right to a welcoming, respectful, supportive and safe environment when they visit the library. However, the library is a busy public place, and library staff will not assume responsibility for children left unattended within our public facility. The following policy establishes the responsibilities of the library staff, the parent, and/or their caregivers.

DEFINITIONS

In this policy:

- A child means a person 11 years old or younger.
- A parent is any person who is either the natural, adoptive, or the foster parent of the child.
- A caregiver is anyone 12 years old or older to whom the parent has given responsibility for the care of the younger child.

PRINCIPLES

- The conduct of all patrons must show respect for the comfort and safety of patrons and library staff (see OP-18A Children's Code of Conduct).
- Children age 11 or under must have a parent or caregiver in the immediate vicinity, unless they are participating in a library program where the parent's presence is not requested or required.

RESPONSIBILITIES

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 expects parents, caregivers, and teachers to:
 - a) accompany children while in or about library premises.
 - b) monitor the use of services and collections by children under their care.

- c) be responsible for borrowed materials incurred by children under their care.
 - d) be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care.
4. Children attending programs must be accompanied by a caregiver for the duration of the program.

Section 2: Responsibility of Library Staff

1. If a child is perceived to be in distress, library staff will remain with the child until the parent or caregiver takes responsibility.
2. If necessary, library staff will contact the police or the Children's Aid Society and remain with the child until the proper authorities can take the child into their protection.
3. Library staff will inform the CEO of the incident in a timely fashion.

Duty to Report

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. The duty to report applies to any child who is, or appears to be, under the age of 16 years.

When library staff members have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, they will advise the Chief Executive Officer and together will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the local CAS, as stated in the CFSA s.72 (1).

Related Documents

1. Ontario's Child and Family Services Act. R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER C.11, s.72 (1).
2. Hastings Highlands Public Library. **OP 12 - Circulation Policy**
3. Hastings Highlands Public Library. **OP 07 - Internet Access Policy**
4. Hastings Highlands Public Library. **OP 18A – Children's Code of Conduct**