

Georgina Public Library Board Policy Manual

Policy Title: Supervision of Children

Intent

Georgina Public Library welcomes children of all ages, and encourages and promotes children's use of the library; **however** parents and guardians should be aware that the library is a public place that is open to all members of the community. Furthermore, as in all public facilities, emergencies can occur.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to monitor the whereabouts and behavior of their children. Library staff, though concerned about the safety and well-being of children, cannot be responsible for their safety or supervision.

Child protection in Ontario is legislated under the Ontario Child and Family Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER C.11), under the responsibility of local children's aid societies.

Regulations

- The Ontario Child and Family Services Act (R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER C.11) §79) stipulates that children under the age of 16 must be adequately supervised by a parent/guardian/caregiver. The library policy is that any child under the age of 10 shall have **direct** supervision at all times within the library. Georgina Public Library requires a caregiver to be at least 13 years of age, reflecting CAS and community standards for a minimum babysitting age. It is stressed that not all 13-year-olds or teenagers are mature enough to be left responsible for younger children, and it is the parent/guardian/caregiver's responsibility to ensure that adequate provisions are made for the safety of their children, including immediate contact information if assistance is required.
- It is also emphasized that library staff are unable to prevent a child who wishes to leave the library from doing so.
- A child under 10 who is attending a library program need not be accompanied into the program by a parent/guardian/caregiver unless otherwise indicated. However, the parent/guardian/caregiver must remain in the library during the program.
- Parents are responsible for supervising their child's access to all library resources, including the Internet (see the Public Access to Computers and Internet Services Policy).
- As a public place, the library does not monitor the activities of its users unless there is a problem with conduct or a child is left

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unattended. Truancy is a school and parent issue, not a library one. The library cannot act in the role of either parent or police. If a parent/guardian/caregiver or school representative telephones to inquire if a child is in the library, staff will attempt to locate and bring the child to the phone to speak with them.

- If staff suspect child abuse, they are required by law to contact the police or Children's Aid Society.
- Procedures for dealing with unattended children will be implemented in the following or similar situations: an unattended child is under the age of 10, is alone and frightened, is doing something dangerous, seems to be in danger from another person, is not following the library rules after reasonable warnings, or is alone in the library at closing time.
- Under no circumstances will library staff provide transportation for unattended children or take them away from the library.
- Two staff members must be present with an unattended child at all times.

Staff Procedures for Dealing with Unattended/Inadequately Supervised Children in the library:

1. Attempt to comfort an unattended or lost child and help to locate the parent/guardian/caregiver within the public areas of the building.
2. Ascertain if transportation arrangements have been made.
3. Identity of the parent/guardian/caregiver will be verified with the child.
4. If the parent/guardian/caregiver cannot be located within the building or provision of care for the child is inadequate, attempt to contact by phone to arrange pickup of the child.
5. If the library is closing, inform parent/guardian/caregiver of this fact and that they must pick up their child within 15 minutes.
6. Remain with the child until the appropriate adult arrives.
7. Inform the parent/guardian/caregiver of the Supervision of Children Policy.
8. If all reasonable attempts to locate the appropriate adult fail, or if no one arrives within 15 minutes of closing, call York Regional Police Service.
9. Complete an Incident Report documenting attempts to contact caregiver, parent or guardian and steps taken.

Phone numbers:

Children's Aid Society York Region: 905-895-2318
York Regional Police: 1-866-876-5423

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Attachments:

- For safety sake posting

POLICY HISTORY:	
Initial Draft	November 22, 2006
Board Adoption	August 16, 2007
Revised & Adopted:	August 21, 2014