

Grey Highlands Public Library

Policy Type: **Operational**

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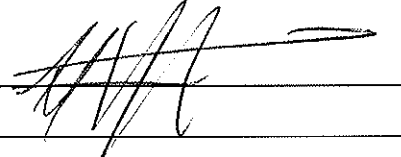
Policy Title: **Unattended Children**

Policy Approval Date: January 17, 2108

Signature:

Policy Review Date:

Chairperson



The Grey Highlands Public 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 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. This policy also contains guidelines for Library staff to follow when they are confronted with a situation where a child's conduct is unacceptable or a child's security is at risk.

Definitions

In this policy:

- a child means a person under sixteen years of age, unless otherwise specified.
- a parent is any person who is either the natural, adoptive or foster parent of the child.
- a caregiver is anyone 12 years of age and older, to whom the parent has given responsibility for the care of the younger child.

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* (CFSA) with regards to supervision of children.

Specifically:

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."

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) monitor the use of services and collections by children under their care
 - c) be responsible for borrowed materials and fines incurred by children under their care
 - d) be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care

4. Children nine (9) years old and younger must be under the supervision of parent, guardian or responsible caregiver while in the Library.
5. Children under the age of five (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.

Unattended Children (Continued)

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 is perceived to be endangering him/herself
 - c) another person in the library poses a perceived threat to the unattended child
 - d) an unattended child exhibits specific inappropriate behaviour
 - 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. Sharing the Library environment with other people requires that everyone follow the Library Code of Conduct established by the Library Board and posted in the building and on the Library website. If a child in this age group violates the Library Code of Conduct, the child and the parent, guardian, or caregiver will be informed of the code. If inappropriate behavior continues, the family may be asked to leave the library.
3. Where a responsible adult cannot be contacted, library staff will:
 - a) not leave a child unattended at closing time
 - b) under no circumstances 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. A minimum of two staff members will remain with the child until the police arrive.
4. Requests for information regarding missing children/runaways
 - a) Staff will not give information to any person over the phone as to whether a minor is currently in the library or has been in recently.
 - b) If the situation seems to be serious, staff may offer to take a message and ask the child to call the person back.
 - c) If there is an active police investigation, library staff will cooperate with the police in helping to locate a missing minor.

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 Chief Executive Officer 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.72 (1).

Related Documents

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