

Pembroke Public Library



Policy Type:	Operational	Policy Number:	OP-10
Policy Title:	Children in the Library	Initial Policy Approval Date:	April 19, 2018
Motion #	23:26	Last Review/Revision Date:	September 21, 2023
		Year Of Next Review:	2027

The Pembroke 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 in the Library as well as parents, guardians and adults who work with children. This policy also sets out the responsibilities for the safety of children in the Library.

The Pembroke 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, 1998*. See Appendix A.

Services:

1. Collections:
 - a. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive collection of materials for and about children, based on the *Collection Development (OP-04)* policy
 - b. The collections for children 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
 - a. The staff will develop profiles of the collections to define the scope and to address the issues of:
 - i. Canadian authors and content
 - ii. award-winning titles
 - iii. non-fiction material that complement the local school curriculum
 - iv. age-appropriate formats

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2. Reference and Readers Advisory:

- a. 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
- b. Library staff should conduct interviews to better understand what each child wants and needs
- c. Library staff will point out the variety of resources available in all areas of the Library as appropriate.

3. Programs:

- a. The Library will provide programming for children and parents, 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
- b. The Library will provide educational, entertaining and literature related programs and support for children, such as:
 - i. programs for parents/guardians, adults, 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, that will emphasize early literacy and Library orientation, and that encourage reading for leisure, or highlight various aspects of the collection
 - iii. programs for summer, school breaks and professional development days that will be primarily book based and will highlight various aspects of our collection while encouraging reading for pleasure or leisure activities
- c. The number of participants for all programmes will be restricted based on size of the facility, fire department limits, staff supervision available, etc.; this will be enforced by the children's programmer in charge
- d. Some programs may limit the age of children 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 of more than one child.

Library Space:

- 1. The Library will provide a well-planned area for children that is distinct from the adult area with signage that is clear and age-appropriate.

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2. These areas should be visually stimulating so that children are able to readily distinguish their own space from the rest of the Library.
3. These areas will have furniture, shelves and equipment that are designed for and accessible to all children.
4. The area for children 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:

1. The Board will support a program of ongoing staff training and professional development in children's services.
2. The CEO will ensure that all staff members assigned to children's services receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable Library service.
3. The Library staff will advocate for children's services in the community by:
 - a. collaborating with agencies to promote early literacy, love of reading, life-long learning and children's well-being
 - b. seeking support for children's services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc.
 - c. networking with other agencies who provide service to children in the community, region and province
 - d. communicating with principals, teacher librarians and teachers in the community
 - e. promoting the children's services and collections to groups who could benefit from them (schools, daycares, etc.
4. Library staff will assist young people with finding materials, using the Internet or attending programs, but parents/guardians are responsible for their children's use of the Library.

Safety of Children in the Library:

The Pembroke 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.

1. Responsibilities of the Parent or Caregiver:

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- a. Responsibility for the welfare and the behaviour of children using the Library ultimately rests with the parent/guardian or an assigned caregiver
 - b. The Library is governed by the terms in the Ontario Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) with regards to supervision of children, and specifically these terms:
 - i. 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”.
 - ii. 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.”
 - c. The Library expects parents, caregivers and teachers to:
 - i. not leave children requiring supervision unattended in or about Library premises
 - ii. monitor the use of services by children under their care
 - iii. be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care
 - d. 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
 - e. Children nine (9) years old and younger must be accompanied by an adult while in the Library
 - f. Children ages ten (10) and over are welcome to use the Library independently on a regular basis, but parents are still responsible for the behavior of any children while they are in the Library.
2. Responsibility of Staff:
- a. The Library staff members will be guided by this policy in situations, where
 - i. an unattended child is found frightened or crying in the Library
 - ii. an unattended child is perceived to be endangering him/herself
 - iii. another person in the Library poses a perceived threat to the unattended child
 - iv. an unattended child exhibits specific inappropriate behaviour
 - v. an unattended child is not met by a responsible caregiver at closing time
 - vi. a child is consistently left on his or her own in the Library for long periods of time
 - b. Where a responsible adult cannot be contacted, Library staff will:

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- i. not leave a child unattended at closing time
 - ii. not give the child a ride home
 - iii. contact local police or Children's Aid Society (CAS)
 - iv. remain with the child until the proper authorities can take the child into their protection
- 3. Duty to Report:
 - a. The *Child and Family Services Act* (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 the Children's Aid Society (CAS) if they suspect that a child or youth under the age of 16 is or may be in need of protection
 - b. 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
 - c. 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. *Pembroke Public Library, OP-04 - Collection Development*
3. *Pembroke Public Library, OP-07 - Internet Services and Technology*
4. *Pembroke Public Library, OP-12 - Circulation*

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Appendix A

Ontario Library Association - Position on Children's Rights in the Public Library

Children in Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom
2. Equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users.
3. A full range of materials, services and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their needs.
4. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.
5. A Library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.
6. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in children's services.
7. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service from birth through the transition to adult user.
8. An advocate who will speak on their behalf to the Library administration, Library Board, municipal council and community to make people aware of the goals of children's services.
9. Library policies written to include the needs of the child.

Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting, November 1998

Posted at http://accessola2.com/data/1/rec_docs/380_ola3.pdf