

DATE OF LAST REVISION: JULY 2015**POLICY/PROCEDURE TYPE: PUBLIC SERVICE****REVIEW SCHEDULE: : 5 YEARS**

PURPOSE

Markham Public Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and safe environment for customers of all ages. It is for the safety of each child that the Library has adopted this Safe Child Policy.

Markham Public Library welcomes and encourages children to visit the Library, use Library resources and services, and attend Library programs. Children in the Library should always be accompanied by a parent, a guardian, or an assigned caregiver who is no less than 12 years of age. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the Library rests with the parent, guardian, or caregiver and not with the Library staff.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy:

- “Child/Children” refers to all persons who are below the age of twelve (12)
- “Parent” refers to a person who is either the natural, adoptive, or foster parent of the child.
- “Guardian” refers to a person with legal responsibility for the care and custody of the child.
- “Caregiver” is anyone age 12 or older to whom the parent/guardian has given responsibility for the care of the younger child.
- “Unattended Child” refers to a child left without visible supervision by a parent, guardian or caregiver within Markham Public Library
- “Staff” refers to Library employees, volunteers, and community partners in shared facilities.

POLICY**SECTION 1: RESPONSIBILITY OF 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 of the Ontario Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) with respect to the 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 the 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:
 - Monitor the use of services and collections by children under their care
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- Not leave children requiring supervision unattended in or about Library premises
 - Be responsible for borrowed materials and fines incurred by children under their care
 - Be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care
4. Children less than ten (10) years of age must be directly supervised by an adult (parent, guardian or caregiver) while in the Library.
 5. Children under the age of five (5) attending programs must remain in the eyesight of their parents or, if in the confines of a room during a scheduled program, may be supervised by the Library staff only during the scheduled time of the program. In the latter case, parents must remain in the building throughout the duration of the program.

SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITY OF LIBRARY STAFF

1. Library staff will be guided by this policy in all situations where an unattended child is found in the Library.
2. Where a responsible adult cannot be contacted, or the child is unable to provide name and contact information of parent or guardian, Library staff will:
 - Contact local police or Children's Aid Society (CAS)
 - Remain with the child until the proper authorities can take the child into their protection
 - Refrain from giving the child a ride home

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 their Manager, or designate, and together will promptly report the concern and related information to the local CAS, as stated in the CFSA s. 72 (1).

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Ontario Child and Family Services Act. R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER C.11, s. 72 (1)
Unattended Child Procedures
Unattended Child Log
Unattended Child – Letter to Parents