



Orangeville Public Library

Unattended Children Policy

Board motion number: 19.27

Date of next review: April 2023

Date Approved: April 24, 2019

Date of original motion: February 16, 2005

Policy type: Public

Board Chair's signature: _____

Purpose:

Orangeville Public Library welcomes and encourages children of all ages to use the facilities and services of the library. However, library staff cannot assume responsibility for the safety and well-being of children left unattended in the building. In an effort to ensure their safety and well-being within a public facility and to maintain an atmosphere of appropriate library use, the following policy has been adopted.

Policy:

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 guided by the terms in the Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA) with regards to unattended children.

Specifically:

- a. Section 136 (3) "Leaving child unattended (3) No person having charge of a child younger than 16 years of age shall leave the child without making provision for the child's supervisor and care that is reasonable in the circumstances."
- b. The legislation does not specify an age at which a child can be left alone, rather the legislation sets out to protect young people from any type of abuse or neglect and requires that all parents and caregivers must take reasonable plans (which will vary according to a child's age, maturity and circumstances) for the supervision of young people under 16 in their care.

3. The library presumes parents, caregivers and teachers will:
 - a. not leave children requiring supervision unattended in or about library premises, monitor the use of services and collections by children under their care
 - b. be responsible for borrowed materials and fines incurred by children under their care
 - c. be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care.
4. Children under the age of ten (10) years old must be accompanied by an adult or caregiver while in the library.
5. 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 inappropriate behaviour
 - e. an unattended child is not met by a responsible caregiver at closing time
 - f. child is consistently left on his or her own in the library for long periods of time.
6. Where a responsible adult cannot be contacted, library staff will:
 - a. not leave a child unattended at closing time
 - b. not give the child a ride home
 - c. contact local police or Dufferin Child and Family Services (the local Children's Aid Society)
 - d. remain with the child until the proper authorities can take the child into their protection.
7. Duty to Report
 - a. The Child, Youth and Family Services Act (Section 125) 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.
 - 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 Library CEO or designate and together they will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the local CAS (Dufferin Child and Family Services), as required in CYFSA s.136 (1).