



## Children in the Library Policy

Board motion number: 2023-021

Date of next review: May 2027

Date Approved: May 24, 2023

Date of original motion: February 16, 2005

Policy type: Public

Board Chair's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Purpose:**

Orangeville Public Library welcomes and encourages children of all ages to enjoy the library's programs, collections, services, and spaces. This policy sets out responsibilities to ensure the safety and well-being of children within our public facility.

Library staff are trained to assist children but cannot assume responsibility for the safety and supervision of children left unattended in the building.

### **Policy:**

The Orangeville Public Library recognizes that the needs of children 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.

Responsibility for the welfare and the behaviour of children using the library ultimately rests with the parent/legal guardian or an assigned caregiver. The library recognizes terms as stipulated in the Ontario [Child, Youth and Family Services Act](#).

Library staff are obligated by the Child, Youth and Family Services Act to call the Police or the Dufferin Child and Family Services if they have any concerns about the safety and well-being of a child. See section below on Duty to Report.

### **General Guidelines**

Children under the age of ten (10) years old must be accompanied by an adult or caregiver while in the library.

Children ages 10 and over are welcome to use the library independently, however, parents are still responsible for the behaviour of any children while in the library.

Parents or caregivers are responsible for supervising their child's access to all library resources including the internet and digital technologies.

## **Library programming**

Parents or caregivers of children 5 and under must remain in the program space. Parents or caregivers of children ages 6 - 9 must remain in the library and return to the programming area by the end of the program.

## **Unattended Children at the Library**

Library staff will intervene when they become aware that a child in the library is in these, or similar situations:

- A child is alone and visibly upset or ill.
- A child is left alone and doing something dangerous or appears to be at risk.
- A child is alone and is not following library behaviour expectations after reasonable reminders.

If a child is left in the library at closing time, or in the event of an emergency or closure, the staff person in charge will attempt to contact the parent or caregiver. If they cannot be contacted within 15 minutes, staff will notify the police.

Library staff cannot give a child a ride home. They will remain with the child until the proper authority can take the child into their protection.

## **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 (Dufferin Child and Family Services) if they suspect that a child or youth under the age of 18 is, or may be, in need of protection.
- b. When library staff members have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is, or may be, in need of protection, they will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the local CAS (Dufferin Child and Family Services). They must also advise the Library CEO or designate.

## **Requests for information regarding children**

Staff will not give information to any person over the phone as to whether a child is currently in the library or has been in the library recently.

In the case of a missing child or a child in danger, information will be shared with the enforcement agency requesting the information, through the CEO or designate.

## **Strategic Alignment:**

Strategic Direction – Connect

Goal – Uphold equitable access to information and services in a safe and welcoming environment.

Objective E – Support formal and informal learning and literacy development for all ages