



## Safe Child

### Operational

### Purpose

The Safe Child policy was developed to ensure that children and their families have a welcoming experience at Brantford Public Library, in accordance with child safety legislation.

### Principles

The Library welcomes children and families to enjoy its programs and services. Brantford Public Library is responsible for providing a safe facility for public use. Despite this, public spaces pose inherent risks.

It is the responsibility of parents and caregivers to monitor the welfare and behavior of their children at all times while in the Library. Parents are responsible for their child's use of Library collections and services.

The Library does not monitor the activities of its patrons unless there is a problem with conduct, if a child is in distress, or if a child is otherwise evidently too young to be left unattended.

### Policy

The Library is guided by the terms in the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* with regards to unattended children:

Section 136(3): No person having charge of a child younger than 16 shall leave the child without making provision for the child's supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances.

This legislation does not specify an age at which a child can be left alone, but sets out to protect young people from any type of abuse or neglect and requires that all parents and caregivers must make 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.

To this end, the Library requests that caregivers:

- Ensure that children requiring supervision are not left unattended in the library
- Monitor the use of services by children under their care
- Be responsible for the appropriate behavior of children under their care

At Brantford Public Library:

- Children ages 10 and over are welcome to use the library independently, but parents and caregivers are still responsible for the behavior of children under the age of 16 while in the Library
- It is recommended that children under the age of 10 be accompanied by someone who can capably supervise them while in the Library
- Where appropriate, children under 10 attending programs may remain with the Library staff during the program; parents must remain in the Library building.

Upon encountering an unattended child, Brantford Public Library staff are expected to:

- Remain with the child until the situation is resolved
- First attempt to find or contact parents within the Library premises
- Not give the child a ride home
- Contact Brantford Police Services or Family and Children's Services of Grand Erie
- Be guided in the above actions by evidence of distress, Rules of Conduct violations, a child being evidently too young, or being left unattended at library close

The Library supports its staff in their Duty to Report, as guided by the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* Section 125, when a person has reasonable grounds to suspect a child has suffered or is at risk to suffer physical harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, emotional harm, or neglect. In such cases, "the person shall immediately report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to a society." Locally, reports should be made to Child and Family Services of Grand Erie (519-753-8681 or 1-888-753-8681).

## History

**Supersedes:** Not applicable

**Background documents, related policies:** Brantford Public Library Rules of Conduct, [Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, S.O. 2017, c. 14, Sched. 1](#)

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