



Safe Child Operational

Purpose

The Safe Child Policy has been created to ensure that Brantford Public Library is a welcoming space for children and their caregivers, and that legislation concerning the safety of children is followed.

Principles

The Library welcomes children to enjoy its programs and services. Library staff are trained to assist children in using the Library, however, parents are responsible for their children's safety and supervision. Both branches of the Brantford Public Library are public buildings with all the inherent risks of such a setting.

Responsibility for the welfare and the behaviour of children using the Library rests solely with the parent/guardian or an assigned caregiver.

All patrons, including children, are expected to behave in a manner that is appropriate to the atmosphere in the building for all patrons (Please refer to the Rules of Conduct).

Policy

Legislative Requirements

The Library is governed by the Terms in the Ontario Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) with regards to 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 provision for the child's supervision and care that was reasonable in the circumstances rests with the person."

Duty to Report

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 Family and Children's Services (FACS) if they suspect that a child or youth under the age of 16 is or may be in need of protection.

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.

When library staff members have reasonable ground to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, they will advise the Chief Executive Officer (or designate) and together they will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the local FACS, as stated in the CFSA s.72(1).

Procedures

Responsibility of the Parent of Caregiver

The Library requests that parents and caregivers:

- a. ensure that children requiring supervision are not left unattended in or about library premises
- b. monitor the use of services and collections by children under their care
- c. be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care

Responsibility of Staff

Library staff will be guided by this policy in situations where:

- a. a child is found frightened or crying in the Library
- b. a child is perceived to be endangering him/herself
- c. another person in the Library poses a perceived threat to the child
- d. a child exhibits specific inappropriate behaviour, according to the Rules of Conduct
- e. a child is not met by a responsible caregiver at closing time
- f. a child is consistently left on his or her own in the Library for long periods of time

The Library staff member will first attempt to locate the parent/guardian or caregiver to alert them to the situation.

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 Family and Children's Services (FACS)
- d. remain with the child until the proper authorities can take the child into their protection

Resources

- a. Brant Family and Children's Services
519-753-8681 (24 hours service)
- b. Family and Child Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. C.11
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c11#BK135>
- c. Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: It's Your Duty
<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/childrensaid/Reportingchildabuseandneglect.pdf>

History

Supersedes: Not applicable

Background documents, related policies: Created to replace section 2.32 *Unattended Children in Situation Manual*

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