



Woodstock Public Library Policy

Policy Name: **Safety and Conduct of Children in the Library**

Category: **Library Services**

Version: **08 September 2020**

POLICY STATEMENT AND RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a statement of philosophy and identify key objectives respecting issues of safety and conduct of children in the Library.

SCOPE

This policy shall apply to the Woodstock Public Library.

DEFINITIONS

In reading and interpreting this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

“CEO” means the Chief Executive Officer of the Woodstock Public Library.

“Caregiver” means a person designated by the parent or guardian with responsibility for and control of a child and can include a teacher or babysitter.

“Child” means a person under the age of 16 years.

“City” means the Corporation of the City of Woodstock.

“Library” means the Woodstock Public Library.

“Library Premises” means outside the library on the grounds of the building.

“Library Staff” means all staff employed by the Woodstock Public Library Board.

POLICY, PROCEDURE AND IMPLEMENTATION

1.0 Responsibility

- 1.1 The CEO is responsible for implementing the appropriate procedures in order to ensure that Library staff understand and adhere to the intent of the policy.

2.0 Objectives

- 2.1 The Library welcomes children of all ages; however, library staff cannot assume parental responsibility. In particular, they cannot assume responsibility for the safety, care, or supervision of children of any age, at any time, whether in the library or on library premises.

3.0 Legislation

- 3.1 The Library acknowledges the authority of provincial legislation in this matter, being the Child and Family Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. C. 11. The relevant sections are:

Section 79(3) "No person having charge of a child less than sixteen 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 ten 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."

4.0 Responsibility of Parents, Guardians and/or Caregivers

The Library expects parents, guardians and/or caregivers:

- a) to accompany and monitor the activities of children under the age of 10 years while they are in the Library, or on library premises;
- b) to have made appropriate provisions for the supervision, and care of children over the age of 10 years, and under the age of 16 years.

5.0 Unattended Children in the Library

- 5.1 In most circumstances, the health and safety of children, particularly older children and teens, is not an issue. However, Library staff will intervene and will follow established procedures when they become aware that a child in the Library is in these, or similar situations:
- a) a child is alone, visibly upset or ill;
 - b) a child under the age of 12 is left alone with younger siblings;

- c) a child is alone and doing something dangerous, or another person in the Library seems to be a danger to the child;
- d) a child is alone, and is not following Library rules after reasonable warnings;
- e) a child is left alone at the Library at closing time.

6.0 Requests for Information Regarding Truant Children

- 6.1 As a public facility, the Library does not monitor the activities of its customers unless there is a problem with conduct or a child is inappropriately left alone as outlined above.
- 6.2 If a school age child is noticed to be spending considerable time in the Library during the school day, Library staff may check with the child and ask that a parent confirm with the Library that he/she is aware of the child's whereabouts.

7.0 Requests for Information Regarding Missing Children/Runaways

- 7.1 Library staff will not give information to any person over the telephone as to whether a child is currently in the Library or has been in the Library recently. Staff may offer to take a message and ask the child to call the person back. Staff will cooperate with police or other authorities if a subpoena, warrant or court order is presented in person. Staff will cooperate with police or other authorities in helping to locate a missing child, or in an AMBER ALERT situation.

8.0 Duty to Report Child Abuse or Neglect

- 8.1 Library staff are required under Section 72 of the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA) to directly report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) or police services. Abuse includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and risk of harm.

9.0 Children and the Patron Code of Conduct

- 9.1 The Library reserves the right to remove the privileges of any Library user found in contravention of the Library's Patron Code of Conduct. A child's failure to comply with the Patron Code of Conduct or other Library policies may result in consequences deemed by Library staff to be appropriate to the behavior. The Library may require children who are in chronic violation of Library rules to be accompanied by a parent/caregiver during Library visits for a period to be determined by the CEO or designate.

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

Child and Family Services Act, R.S.O. 1990. c. C.11

Woodstock Public Library – Patron Code of Conduct Policy

Woodstock Public Library – Procedure – Safety of Children in the Library

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