



The Deep River Public Library

Policy Type:	Operational	Policy Number:	OP-15
Policy Title:	Children in the Library	Initial Policy Approval Date:	September, 2024
		Last Review/Revision Date:	
		Year of Next Review:	2028

The Deep River Public Library recognizes that the needs of children are important in their own right: that their educational growth and recreational activities should be fostered through quality library service, delivered with consideration and respect.

The library welcomes and encourages children of all ages to enjoy the library's programs, collections, services and spaces. Library staff work to engage children, families and teens in positive ways, and provide support while they are in the library. All members are expected to abide by the library's Code of Conduct.

This policy sets out the responsibilities for the safety and supervision of children in the library and on library grounds.

Section 1: Library Space

1. The library will provide a well-planned area for children that is distinct from the adult area with signage that is clear and appropriate.
2. This area should be visually stimulating so that children are able to readily distinguish their own space from the rest of the library.
3. These areas will have furniture, shelves and equipment that are designed for and accessible to all children.
4. The area for children is an interactive environment where controlled noise levels are expected, and young people are invited to explore library materials and services in their own way.

Section 2: Safety of Children in the Library

The Deep River Public Library recognizes that children of all ages have a right to a welcoming, respectful, supportive, and safe environment when they visit the library. As a public facility, the library does not monitor the activities of its patrons unless there is a problem with conduct as outlined in OP-13 *Code of Conduct*.

1) Responsibilities of the Parent or Caregiver

- a) Responsibility for the welfare and the behaviour of children using the library ultimately rests with the parent/guardian or an assigned caregiver.
- b) The library is guided by the terms in the Ontario *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* (CYFSA) with regards to unattended children. Section 136 (3)

states that “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.”

- c) To this end, the library expects parents, caregivers and teachers to:
 - i. not leave children and youth requiring supervision unattended;
 - ii. be responsible for their children’s access to all library resources and services, including computers and internet;
 - iii. be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care.
- d) If a school-age child is noticed to be spending time in the library during the school day, library staff may check with the child and connect with the school, the police, or Family and Children’s Services of Renfrew County for guidance if there are concerns about a child’s well-being.
- e) In the library:
 - I. Children entering the building alone are welcome to use the facility providing they respect the rules of the library, other library users, and the materials and equipment of the building. The library recommends caregivers attend the library with their children.
 - II. Although no minimum age has been specified for minors in the building, employees may request any person not observing appropriate behaviour to leave the premises, regardless of age.

2) Responsibilities of Staff

- a) Library staff will be guided by this policy and may intervene in situations where:
 - i. a child is alone and visibly upset or ill;
 - ii. a child is perceived to be endangering themselves or others;
 - iii. another person in the library poses a perceived threat to an unattended child;
 - iv. a child is alone and not following library rules;
 - v. a child is consistently left on their own in the library for long periods of time; and
 - vi. a child is left alone at the library at closing time.
- b) Where a responsible adult cannot be contacted, library staff will:
 - i. not leave a child unattended at closing time;
 - ii. not give the child a ride home;
 - iii. contact Deep River Police or Family and Children’s Services of Renfrew County; and
 - iv. remain with the child until the proper authorities can take the child into their protection.

3) 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 a legislated obligation to report promptly to the Children’s Aid Society (CAS) if they suspect that a child or youth under the age of 16 is, or may be, in need of protection. The CYFSA defines the phrase “child in need of protection” as including physical,

sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, and risk of harm.

- b) Library staff who are concerned that a 16-or 17-year old is, or may be, in need of protection *may* make a report to Family and Children's Services of Renfrew County and they are required to assess the reported information.
- 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 and together they will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to Family and Children's Services of Renfrew County, as required in CYFSA s.136 (1).

Related Documents

- OP - 13 Code of Conduct (Public)
- OP – 01 Membership and Circulation
- OP – 05 Collection Development Policy
- OP – 06 Internet Use Policy