

Ontario Public Library

Policy 4002.1

SAFE CHILD POLICY

The Library is dedicated to providing a warm, welcoming, exciting and safe environment for people of all ages. We are a valuable community resource of materials, information, services and programs. As a public institution, our doors are open to all, regardless of age, origin, race, gender or background. It is for the safety of each child that the Ontario Public Library has adopted this Safe Child Policy.

Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children while their children are in the Library. Even when parents are not present, they are legally responsible for their children. In this policy, the word PARENT means: mother, father, birth/biological parent, adoptive parent, foster-parent, step-parent guardian. CAREGIVER refers to a family member or paid or unpaid helper who regularly looks after a child.

The staff is committed to helping children with activities related to the Library. However, Library staff will not be responsible for children who have been left without adult supervision.

Children under the age of 10 must be attended to at all times by a responsible parent/caregiver who is at least 12 years of age unless the Youth Services Librarian hosts a special program exclusively for youth of some age without their parents/caregivers. In such cases program registration will be required.

Self-supervised youth, aged 10 and up, are welcome to use the Library as long as they observe the general rules of conduct. For safety's sake, parents should make sure that their children are sufficiently mature before allowing them to visit the Library by themselves.

If a child's behavior is unacceptable, the Staff may ask them to leave the Library and, if necessary, the police may be contacted. At the time of the incident, the Director will meet with the parent/caregiver, if possible. If not, a letter and/or phone call will be sent/made to the parent. If further consequences are needed, they will be at the discretion of the Director.

Parents/caregivers who habitually leave their children unattended during Library hours or fail to retrieve their children at closing time will answer to the Director for the remedy.

Adult patrons who are not engaged in library activities that require materials from the children's area shall be asked to relocate to other areas of the Library. The staff reserves the right to seek the intervention of appropriate law enforcement or social services agencies, as required by individual circumstances.

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REVISED:
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Board of Trustees
Ontario Public Library
Page 1 of 2

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Unattended Children and Closing Time

If the Library is near closing time, the staff will locate children in the Library and remind them of the closing time. The posted closing time will be strictly observed. If there are children without a parent/caregiver, the staff will make every effort to locate him or her to pick up the child. If no parent/caregiver responds, the police department will be called and the situation transferred to that agency.

At no time shall a young child ages 9 and under be left alone in the Library or on Library property. There must be two Library staff with the child until the matter is resolved (either a parent/caregiver arrives or the police assume responsibility for the child). Under no circumstance will a Library staff person transport the child home. A detailed Incident Report will be filed with the Director. If a lateness pattern is observed, suspension of Library privileges may be imposed.

Violations of this Safe Child Policy are grounds for suspension of Library privileges.