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Policy Title:	Unattended Children Policy		R.25/02/2019 (M2019-11)
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Policy Statement

The Powassan & District Union Public Library staff recognizes that children of all ages have a right to a welcoming, respectful, supportive and safe environment when they visit the Library.

Library staff are trained to assist children in using the Library. However, the Library is a busy public place and Library staff cannot assume responsibility for the safety and well-being of children left unattended within our public facility.

Section 1: Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- A “child” is any person under sixteen years of age.
- A “parent” is any person who is either the natural, adoptive, foster parent or legal guardian of the child.
- A “caregiver” is anyone 12 years of age or older to whom the parent has given responsibility for the care of the younger child.

Section 2: Responsibilities of the Parent or Caregiver

1. Responsibility for the welfare and the behaviour of children using the Library ultimately rests with the parent/guardian or an assigned caregiver.
2. 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."

3. The Library expects parents, caregivers and teachers to:
 - a) not leave children requiring supervision unattended in or about library premises
 - b) monitor the use of services and collections by children under their care
 - c) be responsible for borrowed materials and fines incurred by children under their care
 - d) be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care
 - e) provide a written note when their child is unattended and using the library during school hours
4. In accordance with the *Ontario Child and Family Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, C. 11*, **children under the age of 10** must remain in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with a parent or responsible caregiver while in the Library.
5. Children aged 10 or older may use the Library independently; however, parents are still responsible for the actions and well-being of their children while in the Library.
6. Children under the age of five (5) attending programs, may be supervised by the Library staff only during the scheduled time of the program; their caregivers must always remain in the Library building.

Section 2: Responsibility of Staff

1. The Library staff will be guided by this policy in situations, where:
 - a) an unattended child is found frightened or crying in the Library
 - b) an unattended child is perceived to be endangering him/herself
 - c) another person in the Library poses a perceived threat to the unattended child
 - d) an unattended child exhibits specific inappropriate behaviour
 - e) an unattended 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

All children are required to behave in accordance with the *Code of Conduct* policy and are subject to consequences for any non-compliance. This may include, but not limited to, being asked to leave the Library (accompanied by the adult if under 10 years of age) or for chronic violations, to be accompanied by a parent/caregiver during Library visits for a period determined by the CEO or designate.

2. Where a responsible adult cannot be contacted, Library staff will:

- a) not leave a child under 10 unattended at closing time
- b) not give any child a ride home
- c) contact local police or Children's Aid Society (CAS)
- d) remain with the child until the proper authorities can take the child into their protection

Section 3: Duty to Report

1. 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 CAS if they suspect that a child or youth under the age of 16 is or may be in need of protection.
2. 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.
3. 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 the local CAS, as stated in the CFSA s.72 (1).

Related Documents

1. Ontario's Child and Family Services Act. R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER C.11, s.72 (1).
2. PDUPL RES-07 Code of Conduct Policy
3. PDUPL SERV -01 Circulation Policy
4. PDUPL TECH-01 Library Internet Agreement