


POLICY MANUAL	Section No. : OP-15
	Effective Date : May 17, 1999
	Review Date(s):
	Revision Date(s): November 21 2011; April 24, 2017, April 19, 2021, March 20, 2023, March 23, 2026
SECTION : Operational	
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Purpose

The Welland Public Library welcomes children of all ages and encourages children's use of the library.

While the Welland Public Library endeavours to provide a safe environment for all visitors, parents, guardians and/or caregivers are responsible for the supervision of children in their care while on Library premises and/or while attending programming whether in person or virtually. Parent(s), guardian(s), and/or caregivers need to use the same caution with their children at the Library as they would in any other public setting.

Authority

The Welland Public Library adheres to all applicable legislation, including but not limited to, the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, S.O. 2017, c. 14, Sched. 1.*

Scope

The CEO and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for the enforcement of this policy. All Full-Time, Part-Time and Page employees are responsible for abiding by the policy.

Definitions


Parent(s): The person or persons who have lawful custody of the child

Guardian(s): A person or persons who have lawful custody of a child, other than the parent(s) of the child

Caregiver: The person or persons who have been assigned to care for a child by a person or persons with lawful custody of the child

Key Principles

- Service providers shall ensure that children and young persons and their parents have an opportunity to be heard and represented when decisions affecting their interests are made and to be heard when they have concerns about the services they are receiving.
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- It is the responsibility of the parent(s), guardian(s), and/or caregiver(s) to monitor both the whereabouts and behaviour of children in their care when visiting a Welland Public

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Library facility. 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.

- It is recommended that children younger than sixteen (16) years of age younger be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or caregiver while on Library premises.
- Library Staff are not to take custody of minors. Parents of children under the age of 16 are expected to make appropriate provisions for their child's care and supervision while attending Library programs. It is recommended that children who are ten (10) years of age or under that are attending Library programs or events should have a parent, guardian, or caregiver present at the Library for the duration of the activity.
- If minor is left at the Library unattended at closing time, Staff will contact the Niagara Regional Police.
- Parent(s), guardian(s), and/or caregiver(s) are responsible for supervising their child's access to all library spaces and resources including, but not limited to books, films, video games, makerspace equipment, library programs/activities and the Internet.

Duty to Report

- If a person, including a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect the actual or potential physical, emotional, or sexual harm of a child, the person shall immediately report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to Family and Children's Services. Employees shall refer to the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, S.O. 2017, c. 14, Sched. 1* to assist them in making decisions related to this provision.

Guidelines

- Library Staff are expected to take appropriate action when children are left unattended at the Welland Public Library. Two employees are required to respond to these situations. Following attempts to calm and reassure the child, staff will make multiple attempts to locate/contact a parent, guardian, or caregiver. If all reasonable efforts fail, a Manager will contact the Niagara Regional Police and/or Children's & Family Services to report the situation. Under no circumstances will staff transport an unattended child away from the Library.