

LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARY POLICY

Title of Policy: Unattended Children
Policy Type: Board Operational Linkage
Policy No: C-C-03

Effective Date: October 27, 2016

Review: October, 2020

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the roles of Library Employees and caregivers regarding children left unattended in London Public Library (LPL). The Library's intent is to balance access to library services by children of all ages with their safety and well-being.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all caregivers (as defined below) of children who are under twelve (12) years of age, in all locations of LPL.

DEFINITIONS:

Child/Children means all persons who are under twelve (12) years of age.

Caregiver means parents, guardians, caregivers, older siblings, or relatives who are directly responsible for the care and wellbeing of the child, while in London Public Library.

Competency means the ability of the child to accept social cues, be responsible for his/her own functions and behaviour and accept the direction of Employees.

Library buildings means all branch locations of the London Public Library system, whether owned or leased.

Unattended means a child left without visible supervision by a caregiver within London Public Library.

Venues means other spaces which are not Library buildings, such as but not limited to community centres, parks, malls, etc. where Employees are providing Library services, presenting programs or participating in events. This includes activities related to the Library outreach vehicle.

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POLICY STATEMENT:

Children of all ages are welcome in the Library and are encouraged to enjoy materials, services, programs and spaces. While LPL aims to provide a safe environment for all, caregivers are responsible for providing supervision and care of their children while the child is at the Library.

Responsibility of Caregiver:

1. Responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of children using the Library ultimately rests with caregivers. The Library expects caregivers to:
 - monitor the use of services and resources by children;
 - provide supervision when a child is not competent to be unattended;
 - ensure their children behave appropriately according to the Rules of Conduct.
2. Children who are seven (7) years of age or under must be accompanied by a caregiver while in the Library.
 - 2.1 Children who are seven (7) years of age or under attending programs must have a caregiver present nearby inside the branch Library. At Central, the caregiver must be present inside the Children's Library.
 - 2.2 Where Library programs and events are held outside of Library buildings or in other venues, the caregiver must remain within visual range of children who are seven (7) years of age or under at all times.
 - 2.3 Children who are eight (8) to eleven (11) years of age will be assessed by Library Employees for their competency if unattended in the Library. Employees will advise caregivers if their child needs caregiver assistance while on the premises.

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Responsibility of Library Employees:

3. Library Employees will follow this policy in all situations where an unattended child is found in the Library.
4. It is the responsibility of Library Employees to locate and advise caregivers when children are left unattended in the Library. Employees cannot care for children left unattended. Employees will take the appropriate action, including contacting the child's family, London Police Services or the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, as required.

Accountabilities

5. Accountability for application of this policy is vested in the office of the CEO & Chief Librarian by the London Public Library Board (the "Board"). The CEO & Chief Librarian is responsible for the development and application of procedures and guidelines and for adherence to applicable legislation. This responsibility may be delegated to qualified and knowledgeable Employees.
6. Accountability for the setting of this policy resides with the Library Board. The Board will ensure that:
 - The policy is applied in the context of the governance policy framework of the Library;
 - The terms of the policy are applied;
 - The CEO & Chief Librarian establishes management processes, procedures and guidelines; and
 - The CEO & Chief Librarian acts in accordance with the policy.
- 6.1 Concerns about this policy may be addressed to the Library Board through the delegation process.

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BACKGROUND

The Ontario *Child and Family Services Act* states:

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. *R.S.O. 1990, Chapter C.11 S.79 (3)*

INQUIRIES:

Director, Customer Services and Branch Operations

CEO & Chief Librarian

KEYWORDS:

Behaviour
Children
Conduct
Safety

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

Rules of Conduct

DOCUMENT CONTROL:

Approved: October 25, 2005
Reviewed: June 14, 2012 (L12/40.1)
Reviewed: October 27, 2016 (L16/50.1)