



wasaga beach public library

Policy Name	Children in the Library		
Section	Operational	Effective Date	May 25, 2026
Policy Number	OP-14	Reviewed Date	May 2026
Motion Number		Next Review Date	Q2 2030

Purpose

The Wasaga Beach Public Library confirms the general principle that children should be afforded the same rights and privileges as adults in the library. Their intellectual growth, cultural appreciation, and recreational activities should be fostered through quality library service, delivered with consideration and respect. This policy sets out the services to be offered for children in the Library as well as responsibilities for the safety and supervision of children in the library.

Scope

This policy does not deal with all possible situations concerning children. The needs of specific patron groups may be included within a broad policy such as the Membership and Borrowing Policy or the Internet Services and Technology Policy.

Definitions

Child is a library patron under 16 years of age.

Parent / Guardian / Caregiver is the individual who has legal responsibility for the child, or have been entrusted with their supervision while in the library.

Policy

The Wasaga Beach Public Library adopts the principles stated in the Ontario Library Association's position on *Children's Rights in the Library, 1998*. See Appendix A.

The unique needs of children will be taken into account in all areas of library service including, but not limited to, policies, procedures, furniture, shelving, materials, programs, design of library space, rules, and staff training.

1.1 Privacy

Children have the same privacy and access rights as adults, except that section 54(c) of *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56. (MFIPPA) provides that a person who has lawful custody of an individual may exercise the rights of access of an individual less than 16 years of age. Accordingly, if a child under 16 is entitled to access, so would his or her custodial parent. Therefore, a parent may request a list of their child's borrowed materials, amount of fees or have mail or email notifications sent in care of the parent.

1.2 Collections



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Separate collections, in multiple formats, will be available for children. These collections will meet the changing educational needs and personal interests of children. Collections will contain materials suitable for children in all stages of their growth and development. (See also Collections Policy).

1.3 Reference and Readers Advisory

Library staff will utilize the full range of library collections, technology, and resources to answer all users' requests for advice on selecting books and for information, regardless of age, with confidentiality and respect. Library staff should engage in meaningful and age-appropriate conversation to better understand what each child wants and needs. Library staff will point out the variety of resources available in all areas of the library as appropriate.

1.4 Programs

Separate programming for children will be developed based on community needs and available library resources. This programming will strive to stimulate creative potential and encourage the habit of reading, independent learning and lifelong use of the library. Programs for classes, children's groups, daycares, etc. will be scheduled at appropriate times for the target age group. This includes, March Break, school PD Days or summer programs for school-aged children.

1.5 Partnerships

Library staff may partner and cooperate with other community organizations that provide or promote services for children. This may include, but is not limited to, local schools, daycare centres, service clubs and other service providers.

1.6 Library Space

The Library will provide an area for children that is distinct from the adult area with signage that is clear and age-appropriate. This area will have furniture, shelves and equipment that are designed for and accessible to children.

1.7 Staffing

The library staff will advocate for children's services in the community by:

- Collaborating with agencies to promote early literacy, love of reading, and lifelong learning;
- Communicating with educators in the community;
- Promoting children's services and collections to groups who could benefit them (schools, daycares, etc.).

Library staff will assist children with finding materials, using the Internet or attending programs; however, it is the responsibility of parents or guardians to monitor their children's use of the library and suitability of materials borrowed. Library staff will never undertake this parental role, even if requested to do so by a parent or guardian.

1.8 Safety of Children in the Library

The Wasaga Beach Public Library welcomes and encourages children of all ages to enjoy the Library's programs, collections, services, and spaces. As a public facility, the library does not monitor the activities of its patrons unless there is a problem with conduct, or a child is left unattended.

1.9 Unattended Children in the Library

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." The CYFSA does not state an age a child can be left alone or unattended. Factors other than age need to be considered. The age that a child is capable of attending the library alone should be decided by the parent or guardian.

1.10 Responsibilities of the Parent, Guardian or Caregiver

Responsibility for the welfare and the behaviour of children using the library ultimately rests with the parent, guardian, or caregiver. The Library expects parents/caregivers/teachers to:

- Not leave children requiring supervision unattended in or about library property;
- Monitor the use of services and collections by children under their care;
- Be responsible for borrowed materials and fees incurred by children under their care;
- Be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care.

Young children attending programs may be supervised by library staff during the scheduled time of the program; parents or caregivers must be available to resume supervision of the child at the conclusion of the program.

Parents or caregivers may be required to attend programs with children depending on the nature of the program. Such requirements will be clearly stated in program promotion and registration.

1.11 Responsibility of Library Staff

Library staff will be guided by this policy in situations where:



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- An unattended child is found frightened or crying in the library;
- An unattended child is perceived to be endangering themselves or others;
- Another person in the library poses a perceived threat to an unattended child;
- An unattended child exhibits inappropriate behaviour;
- An unattended child is not met by a responsible parent, guardian or caregiver at closing time;
- A child is consistently left on their own in the library for long periods of time.

If staff are unable to contact or locate the responsible parent, guardian or caregiver, they will:

- Not leave a child unattended at closing time;
- Not give a child a ride home;
- contact local police or the Children's Aid Society (CAS);
- remain with the child until the proper authorities can take the child into their protection.

1.12 Duty to Report

The *Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)* (Section 125) clearly states that all 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.

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 the CAS and the CAS is required to assess the reported information.

It is not necessary to be certain that a child is or may be in need of protection to make a report to CAS. "Reasonable grounds" refers to the information that an average person, using normal and honest judgement would need in order to decide to report. A person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection will advise the Library CEO as assigned senior staff member, and together they will promptly report the suspicion directly to CAS.

Responsibility

Under the direction of the Library CEO, Library staff must take all appropriate steps to ensure that children are afforded the accessibility, services, privacy and safety considerations necessary to enjoy positive experiences when visiting the Library.



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Appendix A

Ontario Library Association's *Children's Rights in the Library, 1998, states:*

Children in Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom
2. Equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users
3. A full range of materials, services and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their needs
4. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs
5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages
6. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in children's services
7. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service from birth through the transition to adult user
8. An advocate who will speak on their behalf to the library administration, library board, municipal council and community to make people aware of the goals of children's services
9. Library policies written to include the needs of the child

Adopted at the Ontario Library Association
Annual General Meeting
November 1998

<https://accessola.com/advocacy/ola-position-statements/>

Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17c14>

Related materials/policies

Wasaga Beach Public Library Operational Policy – **Code of Conduct**

Wasaga Beach Public Library Operational Policy – **Collection Policy**

Wasaga Beach Public Library Operational Policy – **Membership and Borrowing**

Wasaga Beach Public Library Operational Policy – **Internet Services and Technology**

Policy History

Approved by the Wasaga Beach Public Library Board,

Date: Motion Number: #####

Supersedes Policy ###, Approved Date: Motion #####;

Approved Date: Motion #####