



Policy Type: Operational	Number: LIB-OP-40	Approved: November 13, 2019
Children and Young Adult Services Policy		Next review: 2023

## Purpose

This policy confirms the general principle that children and young adults should be afforded the same rights and privileges as adults in the library as well clarifying services and situations unique to younger library patrons. This policy does not deal with all possible situations concerning children or young adults. The needs of specific patron groups may be included within a broad policy such as the Internet Services Policy or The Circulation Policy.

## Definitions

A **Child** is a library patron under 16 years of age.

A **Young Adult** is a library patron between 16-18 years of age. Due to the wide range of development between the ages of 0 and 18, age may be an approximate indicator of a young library patron’s abilities, interests or maturity. A library patron aged 13 -19 may be considered a teen or young adult for the informal purposes of collection or program development. However certain legislation uses other age benchmarks that impact the relationship between **Child** or **Young Adult** patrons and the Library. These will be clarified in the text, in the appropriate policy section.

**MFIPPA** (Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act)

## Policy

The Huron County Library adopts the principles included in the *Children and Youth Rights Statement LIB-FS-40*

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

### 1. Privacy

- 1.1. Children have the same privacy and access rights as adults, except that section 54(c) of MFIPPA provides that a person who has lawful custody of the individual may exercise the rights of access of an individual less than 16 years of age. Accordingly, if a child under 16 would be entitled to access, so would his or her custodial parent. Therefore a parent may request a list of their child’s overdue materials, amount of overdue fines or lost items or have mail or email notifications sent in care of the parent.

- 1.2. Young adults, 16 and older, have the same rights of privacy and access as an adult.

## **2. Access**

- 2.1. It is expected that children aged 12 years and up will have a library card, may visit the library alone, and may use library equipment.
- 2.2. Children from birth may have a library card. Children, aged 12 and up, are encouraged to have their own library card to allow them to visit the library alone or as part of a school class. Children 16 and older should have a library card to allow them the same privacy and access as an adult to library services and collections.
- 2.3. Special policies, such as reduced overdue fines, may be established for children (under 16) to encourage literacy and acknowledge the unique needs of children. Parents are ultimately responsible for the fines (overdue, lost or damaged items) of their children (under 16 years of age).
- 2.4. Library staff will provide reader's advisory, and use professional knowledge to develop collections and programs for children and young adults; but only a parent has the right to use their own cultural, religious or other views and beliefs to shape or censor the reading, viewing or listening choices of their children.
- 2.5. If possible within available library space and resources, children and young adults will each have separate areas within the library with shelving, furniture and collection formats that meet their unique needs. This may include such items as lower shelving to allow children to reach materials; child-sized chairs and tables or formats specifically designed for children or young adults.
- 2.6. Access to the collection is not limited by age or by a specific patron profile or card type.

## **3. Collections**

- 3.1. Separate collections, in multiple formats, will be available for children and young adults to acknowledge that their interests, needs and reading abilities are not the same as those of adults. Collections will contain materials suitable for babies to young adult; for all stages of their growth and development.

## **4. Programs**

- 4.1. Separate programming for children and young adults will be developed based on community needs and available library resources. This programming will consider the interests, as well as the developmental stages and literacy needs of children and young adults.
- 4.2. Scheduling of programming will be at a convenient time for the target age group. This includes March Break, school PD Days or summer programs for school-aged children.

## **5. Partnerships**

5.1. To assist with the Library's role, in providing services to young patrons, library staff may partner and cooperate with other community organizations that provide or promote services for children and young adults. This may include (but is not limited to) local elementary and secondary schools, municipal day cares and other municipal or County of Huron departments or agencies, service clubs and other service providers.

## **6. Role of Staff**

6.1. It is the prerogative of a custodial parent to limit access to library collections or equipment or censor the reading, viewing or listening of their children under 16 years of age. This is not the role of library staff. Library staff will never undertake this parental role, even if requested to do so by a parent or caregiver.

6.2. See also *Safe Child Policy LIB-OP-41*.

## **7. Internet Policy**

7.1. *Internet Services Policy*, Section 3 (Use by Children). LIB-OP-84 details the use of library computers and Internet services by children.

7.2. The Library does not filter or restrict legal internet access. Exceptions may be made for a children's computer, if it is in an area that is difficult to supervise. Computers designed for very young children may be restricted to safe sites or not connected to the Internet.

## **8. Employment and Volunteering**

8.1. The library has been a traditional source for summer or part-time employment and volunteer hours for young adults.

8.2. The position of Library Page provides employment for young people aged 14 years until graduation from Secondary School.

8.3. The library may be a source of volunteer or cooperative education hours for local secondary or post secondary students. The Library strives to provide a positive, educational experience for these young employees and volunteers.

8.4. In addition, library staff may provide tours, work placements or other forms of mentoring and/or work experience for college or university students in library or other appropriate fields.

## **9. Distance Education**

9.1. Library staff may proctor exams for distance education students of any age if suitable space and eligibility requirements can be met.

9.2. See also the *Proctoring Policy LIB-OP-85*.

## **Replacement Statement**

This Policy replaces all previous versions and comes into effect on the date approved.

## **Citations**

Ontario. Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56.

*Ontario Human Rights Code* (1986); and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1991).

## **Related Documents**

Child and Youth Rights Statement. LIB-FS-40

Internet Services Policy. LIB-OP-84

Safe Child Policy. LIB-OP-41

Proctoring Policy. LIB-OP-85