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Policy Type: Operational	Number: LIB-OP-41	Approved: November 13, 2019
Safe Child Policy		Next Review: 2023

## Purpose

To provide guidelines for library staff when confronted with a situation in which a child’s conduct is unacceptable or a child’s security is at risk. While the Huron County Library welcomes and encourages children of all ages to use the library, their parents and caregivers should be aware that a library is a public place open to all members of the community. Library staff are not responsible for the supervision or security of children on library premises.

## Definitions

**Child.** There isn’t one multipurpose definition of Child for the purposes of this policy. As age benchmarks vary according to the purpose being discussed, relevant ages of children will be included in the text.

**CYFSA** (Ontario. *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*)

**CAS** (Children’s Aid Society)

## Policy

### 1. Unattended Children in the Library

The Library is guided by the terms in the Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA). The CYFSA does not state an age a child can be left alone or unattended. Factors other than age may need to be considered. The Act does say in Section 136 Leaving child unattended (3) “No person having charge of a child younger than 16 of age shall leave the child without making provision for the child’s supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances”.

The age that at child is capable of attending the library alone, may be decided by the parent.

### 2. Responsibility of the Parent or Caregiver

2.1. It is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to monitor the whereabouts and behaviour of their children while on library property. The Library expects parents/caregivers/teachers to:

2.1.1. Not leave children requiring supervision unattended in or about library property

- 2.1.2. Monitor the use of services and collections by children under their care
- 2.1.3. Be responsible for borrowed materials and fines incurred by children under their care
- 2.1.4. Be responsible for the appropriate behavior of children under their care.
- 2.2. Young children attending programs, may be supervised by library staff during the scheduled time of the program; caregivers must be available to reassume supervision of the child at the conclusion of the program.
- 2.3. Parents/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.

### 3. Responsibility of Library Staff

- 3.1. In cases when a child in the library is:
  - 3.1.1. Frightened, crying or ill;
  - 3.1.2. Is endangering him/herself;
  - 3.1.3. Is threatened by another person in the library;
  - 3.1.4. Is behaving inappropriately;
  - 3.1.5. Is not met by a responsible caregiver at closing time;
  - 3.1.6. Is consistently left alone in the library for long periods of time.
- 3.2. If staff are unable to contact/locate the responsible parent/caregiver, they will:
  - 3.2.1. Not leave a child unattended at closing time;
  - 3.2.2. Not give a child a ride home;
  - 3.2.3. Will contact local police or CAS (Children's Aid Society);
  - 3.2.4. Will remain with the child until the proper authorities can take the child into their protection.

### 4. Duty to Report

- 4.1. The **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.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. It is not necessary to be certain a child is or may be in need of protection to make a report to a society. "Reasonable grounds" refers to the information that an average person, using normal and honest judgement would need in order to decide to report. When library staff members have reasonable

grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, they will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based, to the local CAS, as is required in CYFSA s. 136 (1).

- 4.4. A person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection must make the report directly to a Children's Aid Society and must not rely on anyone else to report on his or her behalf.
- 4.5. A staff person making a report as an employee of the library shall inform the County Librarian and complete an incident report as soon as possible.

## **5. Safe Places Huron Youth Certification**

- 5.1. The Library requires staff working with vulnerable populations to have Criminal and Vulnerable Sector Checks.
- 5.2. The Library further supports staff and volunteers by encouraging the completion of Safe Places Youth Certification training, certification and photo identification cards.
- 5.3. See Also County of Huron. Hiring Policies: Criminal, Police and Vulnerable Sector Checks.

## **Replacement Statement**

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

## **Citations**

Ontario. Child, Youth and Family Services Act. R.S.O 2017, c.14, sections 74, 84(1), 125, 136 (3).

## **Related Documents**

Internet Policy LIB-OP-84

Rules of Conduct Policy LIB-OP-80

Children's and Young Adult's Services Statement LIB-FS-4

Children and Young Adult Services Policy LIB-OP-40

County of Huron. Hiring Policies: Criminal, Police and Vulnerable Sector Checks