

Purpose

The Huron County Library (HCL) welcomes and encourages children and youth to use the Library and the full spectrum of services offered. The Library recognizes that the needs of young people are important in their own right. Their intellectual growth, cultural appreciation and recreational activities should be nurtured through quality Library service and delivered with consideration and respect.

HCL supports the Ontario Library Association's (OLA) Position on Children's Rights in the Public Library, as well as the OLA's Position on Teen Rights in the Public Library (Appendices A and B).

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the term child/children refers to both child and tween.

Child: aged 0 to 9

Tween: aged 10 to 12

Teen: aged 13 to 17

Young Adult: aged 18-30

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

Policy

The unique needs of children, tweens, and teens 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. A parent may request a list of their child's overdue materials, amount of lost items fees or have mail or email notifications sent in care of the parent.

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

2. Access

- 2.2. Children from birth may have a library card. Children, aged 10 and up, are encouraged to have their own library card to allow them to visit the library alone. 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. Parents/guardians are ultimately responsible for the fees for-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, tweens and teens; 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 teens 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 teens.
- 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 teens to acknowledge that their interests, needs and reading abilities may not be 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, tweens and teens 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 teens.
- 4.2. Scheduling of programming will be at a convenient time for the target age group. This includes March Break, school PA 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, tweens, and teens. 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 teens.

8.2. The position of Library Page provides employment for young people aged 14 years until 6 months following 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. 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*.

Citations

Brockville Public Library. Youth Services Policy.

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).

Ontario Library Association's Position on Children's Rights in the Library (1998).

Teen's Rights in the Public Library endorsed by the Ontario Library Association, June 2010

Related Documents

Internet Services Policy. LIB-OP-84

Safe Child Policy. LIB-OP-41

Proctoring Policy. LIB-OP-85

Replacement Statement

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

Appendix A

The Ontario Library Association's Position on Children's Rights in the Library

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.

Ontario Library Association Statement passed November 1998.

Appendix B:

Ontario Library Association's Teen's Rights in a Public Library

Teens in Ontario Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom.

The library establishes clear policy statements concerning the right to free access by young adults to library resources and information sources; and respect for the rights of young adults to select materials appropriate to their needs without censorship. The library's teen collection, policies and services should be consistent with the concepts of intellectual freedom defined by the CLA, OLA and Ontario Human Rights code.

2. Equal access to the full range of materials, services, and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their unique needs.

The Library integrates library service to teens into the overall plan, budget and service program for the library. Library service to teens is integrated with those offered to other user groups.

3. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.

The Library incorporates funding for materials and services for teens in the library operating budget and ensures there is equitable distribution of resources to support programs and services for young adults.

4. Collections that specifically meet the needs of teens.

The Library provides a wide spectrum of current materials of interest to young adults to encourage lifelong learning, literacy, reading motivation, and reader development. The library endeavors to develop collections that encourage leisure reading, support homework and school success and responds to gender and cultural diversity. The library provides unfettered access to technology including social networking, licensed databases, and other online library resources for teens.

5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.

The Library provides identifiable spaces for teens that are separate from children's spaces where possible, reflects their lifestyle and allows for teens to use this library space for leisure or study, either independently or in groups.

6. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service at every service point.

The Library promotes friendly, positive, non-biased customer interactions with teens, providing staff development and training and ensures that services for teens embrace cultural and gender diversity and economic differences. Library staff will endeavor to respect the teen's need for privacy and nonjudgmental service and assist young adults in acquiring the skills to effectively access all library resources and become information literate.

7. Library Programs and Services appropriate for Teens.

The Library fosters youth development by providing programs for teens that contribute to literacy, life-long learning and healthy youth development. The library endeavors to provide volunteer opportunities for helping others through community service hours including participating on Library Advisory Boards, and other projects that help develop a sense of responsibility and community involvement. The library's teen services initiatives are effectively managed according to best practices in the field of Youth Services.

8. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in teen services.

Library staff is knowledgeable about adolescent development and age appropriate resources for young adults inclusive of those with special needs. The library provides services by teen specialists as well as by others who are trained to serve teens.)

9. 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 teen services.

The Library works in partnership with other community agencies and organizations to support all aspects of healthy, successful youth development.

10. Library policies are written to include the needs of the youth.

Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting June 2010.