



SUBJECT: CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES POLICY

Policy No: 2024-20

Date: October 21, 2024

Revision Date: October 2028

Pages: 11 (including appendices)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the criteria and guidelines in providing high-quality service to children and youth. All programs, events, and services will provide age-appropriate content and experiences to meet and honour the diverse intellectual, cultural, and recreational needs of Innisfil's children and youth.

Definitions:

Caregiver: Any person, including parents and guardians, who have responsibility for the direct care of the child/children using the Library or library services.

Children: Persons aged 0-11, through to their 12th birthday.

Youth: Persons aged 12-17, through to their 18th birthday.

Employee: All Library employees including, but not limited to, full-time, part-time, contract, seasonal, casual, student/co-op employees, long-term volunteers, and Board Members.

POLICY:

General

Library services to children and youth are a vital and integral part of the Library's mandate. They contribute to the individual growth and development of children and youth by supporting life-long learning, including literacy, numeracy, and problem solving, in a technology-rich environment. As highlighted in the Library's *Position Statement on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility*, Libraries have

a responsibility to create an environment and contribute to a culture that respects people's dignity, ideas, and beliefs, and in which individuals can participate, maximize their contributions, and achieve their full potential.

Children and Youth Services include, but are not limited to, collections, programs, partnerships, and spaces; and are delivered, where possible, by employees with educational backgrounds in services to children, youth, and their families.

Application

This policy applies to all Library Employees, children and youth, their caregivers, and those who work with people under 18 years old in library spaces.

Administration

The Innisfil Public Library Board is committed to providing the best possible services for children and youth and fully endorses the *Children's Rights in the Public Library* statement and the OLA's statement on *Teen's Rights in the Public Library*. The Board also endorses the Canadian Federation of Library Association's *Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries*, which informs various aspects of library service to children and youth. (see **Appendices**)

Guidelines

Space for Children

The Library demonstrates its commitment to exemplary library service for Children, by providing dedicated areas for children and their collections in each branch. These areas strive to be interactive learning environments that, where possible, include children-specific furnishings, age-appropriate technologies, educational toys, and manipulatives; and offer a friendly, inviting atmosphere that encourages exploration and learning. The Library will not restrict children to these spaces, nor will other customers be restricted from accessing children's spaces for appropriate use under the Library's *Rules of Conduct* Policy.

Space for Youth

The Library strives to dedicate a flexible area for youth and their respective collections in each branch. These areas will offer a friendly, inviting atmosphere that promotes communication, respect, and acceptance. Youth are actively encouraged to use all spaces in the Library for both leisure and study, either independently or in groups.

Library employees engage with youth, and work collaboratively with them to tailor programming, collections, and services to meet their needs. Furthermore, the Library will consider the needs of youth in the planning of public spaces, including areas such as the HackLAB, and MediaLAB.

Employees

The Library employs qualified employees dedicated to the provision of excellent library service to children and youth. Library employees do not act in place of a caregiver in programs or the delivery of library services.

Collections, Reference & Readers Advisory

The Library provides a wide range of materials in all formats and at various reading levels to meet the informational, cultural, educational, and leisure needs of children and youth. The Library will maintain a fresh, comprehensive, up-to-date collection for children and youth, which will be accomplished by an ongoing evaluation of resources in accordance with the Library's Collection Management Policy.

Employees will use the full range of library collections, technology, and resources to answer all users' requests for books and information, regardless of age and without judgment, with confidentiality and respect. When seeking to better understand what each child or youth wants and needs, employees will engage in meaningful and age-appropriate conversations, and will point out resources available in all areas of the library as appropriate.

The Library provides unfiltered Internet use for children and youth in accordance with the Public Internet and Technology Use Policy. As stated in this policy, caregivers are responsible for children's use of digital devices and services, including damage, loss, and restricting access to materials online.

Library employees do not act in place of caregivers and will not censor or restrict access to materials found anywhere in the collection. Caregivers, not library employees, determine the suitability of materials in the Library for their child or teen. Additionally, caregivers are responsible for the materials accessed and/or borrowed by the young people in their care as set out in the Membership & Borrowing Policy.

Programming

The Library provides activities, events, and programs for children and youth to enrich their lives, invoke curiosity, stimulate the imagination, and encourage life-long learning and literacy through the incorporation of current trends in early childhood research and education.

Programs support the use of library collections and resources, promote services, and share knowledge and expertise where appropriate.

Programs for children, youth, and families are developed and run as outlined in the Program Policy. Library employees will work alongside caregivers to ensure

children and youth are able to participate in programs to the best of their ability, making recommendations for appropriate programs and services when requested and/or when a child/youth would be better served in another program. Library employees support the safety and wellbeing of children and youth in programs and request caregiver support for the child/youth when and where needed.

Advocacy & Outreach

Employees primarily focused on Children & Youth Services will take an active role in advocacy by:

- Collaborating with appropriate municipal departments, local agencies, services, schools, childcares, etc. to promote early literacy, life-long learning, and the overall wellbeing of children and youth in Innisfil;
- Actively seeking support for children and youth services from community organizations, including fundraising, donations, etc.;
- Networking with others who provide services to children and youth locally, provincially and beyond;
- Fostering two-way communication with principals, teacher librarians, teachers, and other school staff in Innisfil, as well as with other educators providing services to Innisfil children and youth.

Volunteering

The Library offers a variety of youth volunteering opportunities for students living and/or attending school in Innisfil. Volunteer hours are offered to those students who apply on an as needed basis.

Conduct and Behaviour

The Library's *Rules of Conduct Policy* applies to all visitors, regardless of age. Library employees balance access to services for children and youth with their ongoing safety and wellbeing. Responsibility for the behaviour and wellbeing of any child/youth using the library rests with the caregivers. Library employees will enforce the Rules of Conduct Policy to ensure that all customers can enjoy access to Library resources and services. Employees cannot assume responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children and youth left unattended and will follow the guidelines for unattended children and youth below.

Unattended Children and Youth

The Library is a public place and caregivers are responsible for the supervision of any children or youth in their care at all times. The Library is guided by the Ontario *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* (CYFSA), and per Section 136 (3) "**Leaving child unattended** (3) 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 under the circumstances".

This legislation does not specify an age at which a child/youth can be left alone, rather the legislation sets out to protect young people from any type of abuse or neglect and requires that all caregivers must make reasonable plans (which will vary according to a child's age, maturity, and circumstances) for the supervision of young people under the age of 16 in their care.

The library requires caregivers to:

- Not leave children/youth under 16, requiring supervision, unattended in or about library premises;
- Monitor the use of services by children and youth under their care;
- Be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children and youth under their care.

Young people ages 12 years or older are welcome to use the library independently, with the understanding that caregivers remain responsible for their behaviour while on library property. Those caregivers of children under 10 years of age should not leave the library premises while their children are using the space or participating in a program.

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

Employees of the Library, as members of society, as members of the public, and as professionals who work with children, are obligated under the Ontario *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* (Section 125) to report to the Children's Aid Society (known locally as Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions) any suspicions of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, and risk of harm to children or youth under the age of 16. The reporting must be done promptly by the individual who witnesses or suspects that a child/youth has experienced harm or is at risk of being harmed, and Library management must be informed. Employees who are concerned that a 16 or 17 year old is, or may be, in need of protection may make a report to the Children's Aid Society, and the agency is required to assess the reported information.

Appendix #1 – Ontario Library Association Position on Children's Rights in the Library, Adopted 1998

Appendix #2 – Ontario Library Association Teen's Rights In the Library, Adopted 2010

Appendix #3 – Canadian Federation of Library Associations Statement on the Intellectual Freedom and Libraries, Adopted 1974

RELATED POLICIES:

Collection Management Policy

Membership and Borrowing Policy

Program Policy

Public Internet and Technology Use Policy

Rules of Conduct Policy

Approved by the Innisfil Public Library Board, October 21, 2024

Motion Number: 2024.61

Supersedes Policy #2020-26, approved October 19, 2020, Motion #2020.78; and Policy #2016-16, approved October 17, 2016, Motion #2016.80 & Policy #2013-21, approved December 9, 2013, Motion #2013.110; & Policy #2010-11, approved May 17, 2010, Motion #2010.40; & Policy #2005-09, approved November 14, 2005, Motion #2005.54; & Policy #2001-12, approved November 9, 1998, Motion #98.40.

Appendix 1

THE ONTARIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION 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.

Appendix 2



∴ ontario library association

Teen's rights in the Public Library

Goals for Library Services for Teens:

Young people are valuable members of our library community who deserve the same respect, dignity and human rights as all library members. This document provides a framework for developing library services to teens that meet the educational, informational, and cultural and leisure needs of young people in ways that are developmentally appropriate. Each public library has a different community to serve and therefore different priorities and needs.

Although specific services for teens have not been well established in all libraries, these goals are created in the belief that young adulthood is a unique life stage and that young adults are entitled to the same quality of library services offered to other age groups in the population.

(Adapted from the IFLA Guidelines for Library Services for Young Adults, 2006 and the YALSA Guidelines for Library Services to Teens, Ages 12-18, 2006.)

The goal of library services for teens is to assist with the transition from children's services to adult services and to provide access to both resources and an environment that meets the needs of young people for intellectual, emotional and social development. Specifically these needs are based on the unique seven developmental needs of adolescents and the five core values of quality service to teens:

7 Developmental Needs of Teens	5 Core Values of service to teens
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical activity,• Competence and achievement,• Self definition,• Creative expression,• Positive social Interaction with Peers and Adults,• Structure and Clear Limits,• Meaningful Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respecting and responding to unique YA needs,• Providing equal access,• Empowering Youth through participation,• Engaging Teens in active collaboration,• Supporting healthy youth development.
<small>Excerpted from: Dorman, G. (1981). The Middle Grades Assessment Program: User's Manual. Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence.</small>	<small>Core Values excerpted from Jones, P. (2002). <i>New directions for library service to young adults</i>. Chicago: American Library Association.</small>

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.

Appendix 3



Canadian Federation of Library Associations
Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques

Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries

Approval History: ~ CLA: June 27, 1974. Amended November 17, 1983; November 18, 1985; September 27, 2015. CFLA-FCAB: Adopted August 26, 2016; Reviewed April 12, 2019.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations recognizes and values the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as the guarantor of the fundamental freedoms in Canada of conscience and religion; of thought, belief, opinion, and expression; of peaceful assembly; and of association.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations supports and promotes the universal principles of intellectual freedom as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which include the interlocking freedoms to hold opinions and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

In accordance with these principles, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations affirms that all persons in Canada have a fundamental right, subject only to the Constitution and the law, to have access to the full range of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, and to express their thoughts publicly. Only the courts may abridge free expression rights in Canada.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations affirms further that libraries have a core responsibility to support, defend and promote the universal principles of intellectual freedom and privacy.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations holds that libraries are a key institution in Canada for rendering expressive content accessible and affordable to all. Libraries are essential gateways for all persons living in Canada to advance themselves through literacy, lifelong learning, social engagement, and cultural enrichment.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and facilitate access to constitutionally protected expressions of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, including those which some individuals and groups consider unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, in accordance with their mandates and professional values and standards, libraries provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and foster free expression and the right to safe and welcoming places and conditions. To this end, libraries make available their public spaces and services to individuals and groups without discrimination.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and defend privacy in the individual's pursuit of expressive content. To this end, libraries protect the identities and activities of library users except when required by the courts to cede them.



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Furthermore, in accordance with established library policies, procedures and due process, libraries resist efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Library employees, volunteers and employers as well as library governing entities have a core responsibility to uphold the principles of intellectual freedom in the performance of their respective library roles.

You can find CFLA-FCAB's Position on Third Party Use of Publicly Funded Library Meetings Rooms and Facilities: An Interpretation of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries [here](#)