

# Children's Services

## 1. Goal – Service tailored to needs

The mission of the Library is to preserve and promote universal access to a broad range of knowledge, experience, information and ideas in a welcoming and supportive environment. It is the Board's conviction, therefore, that the Library is the principal means whereby the record of thoughts and ideas is made freely available to all and the expression of the creative imagination is encouraged. The Library endorses Children's Rights in the Public Library as adopted by the Ontario Library Association.

Therefore, the Library shall:

- Assemble and administer, in organized collections, books and related educational, informational and recreational materials in order to promote the communication of ideas, an enlightened citizenship and enriched personal lives; and
- Provide books and other materials through which enquiring minds may encounter the original, sometimes unorthodox and critical ideas so necessary in a society that depends on the free circulation of ideas for its health and survival; and
- Provide a progressive, user-oriented service which responds to and anticipates the educational, cultural, leisure and other information needs of the community.

### 1.1. Definitions

"Board" shall mean the Library Board of the St. Marys Public Library

"CEO" shall mean the Chief Executive Officer of the St. Marys Public Library

"Child" or "Children" shall include all persons who are 14 and under "Library" shall mean the St. Marys Public Library

"Parent" shall include any parents, guardians, caregivers, older siblings, and relatives who are directly responsible for the care and wellbeing of the child, while in the Library

"Staff" shall mean the staff of the St. Marys Public Library

"Unattended" shall mean a child left without visible supervision by a parent within the Library

## 2. Client Groups

Children – children up to the age of 14 are the primary user groups of children's services and materials.

Parents – parents are the first access point for Library service to infants, toddlers and pre-school children; they can seek activities which involve themselves with their children, or they may need information on a variety of topics such as parenting, child development and special concerns (e.g., hyperactivity, sex education, divorce, adoption, etc.).

Professional Groups – professionals who work with children often use the resources of the Library, including teachers and staff members in day-care centres, looking for songs, games, read-aloud books, storytelling materials and subject-related information.

Special Interest Groups – persons working with children such as camp leaders, Girl Guide & Boy Scout leaders, those working with children with disabilities, ethnic groups, literacy groups, and home schoolers, often look for age or subject-suitable books and materials.

Library Staff – Staff look for resources to support activities and program in children's services.

### **3. Kinsmen's Children's Library – Environment**

The Kinsmen Children's Library as a service area shall be distinct from the adult area. It is understood that the children's area is no longer a place of silence, but an interactive learning environment with a flexible attitude toward noise.

The furnishings shall be sturdy, washable, painted with non-toxic materials and designed with children in mind. The height of shelves, chairs, tables and catalogues must correspond to the height of the users. Consideration should be given to the disabled.

The Kinsmen Children's Library should be visually stimulating; children should be able to readily distinguish their own area from the rest of the library.

Displays, posters and other decorative elements shall be used to define the children's area, to promote library materials and programs and to make the library welcoming to children.

The children's area shall allow for access by strollers, baby carriages and wheelchairs.

### **4. Materials Selection**

Materials for children shall be chosen in accordance with the Library's overall Collection Development Policy. In addition, there shall be an emphasis placed on collecting award-winning children's titles and titles by Canadian authors.

Children are entitled to:

- A separately purchased collection which is designed to meet their needs and interests from infancy to the end of childhood;
- A catalogue with author, title and subject access to the children's collection;
- A balanced collection to serve a wide variety of users and special needs of the community;
- A collection that is up-to-date, in good condition and generally attractive, and is organized for easy access, with children's capabilities in mind; and

- A collection that includes literature of the highest quality to satisfy the wants and needs of children and to develop their human potential.

Book and non-book materials shall be available representing:

- Canadiana;
- Traditional literature including folklore and myths to convey a cultural heritage;
- Popular and ephemeral literature that reflects the constantly changing environment of children;
- Literature designed to serve special groups such as disabled children, gifted children, and beginning, reluctant and slow readers; and
- A collection of adult materials on children's literature and reading, child development, and other aspects of the world of children.

The collection shall be varied including:

- Picture books;
- Fiction and non-fiction in a variety of subjects;
- Non-circulating reference collection of encyclopaedias, standard reference works;
- Periodicals specifically written for children;
- Pathfinders and reading guides to enrich the book collection;
- Audio-visual materials including electronic resources for use in the Library and to borrow, including audiobooks, CDs, DVDs, games, etc. and the equipment to use these in the Library; and
- Computer access.

## **5. Collection Organization**

Fiction material – shall be organized based on reading level. Material may also be separated by format (hardcover, paperback, electronic, audio etc.)

Non-Fiction material – shall be organized according to the Dewey Decimal Classification System (DDC).

All materials in the children's library shall be listed in the Library's automated catalogue.

## **6. Reference Service**

Reference service is a major responsibility of Staff working with children. Staff must be patient and receptive to the many questions asked by children. Staff should conduct reference interviews to help understand what each child wants and needs. It is the responsibility of Staff to point out the variety of resources available in the library.

## **7. Programming**

The CEO in collaboration with the Staff shall develop a well-planned set of programs and activities for the children throughout the calendar year. Such programs shall be conducted with the intent of bringing children and their parents into the Library, promoting Library services and fostering a love of reading and learning. Examples of programs may include: storytelling for young children, and other pre-school programs, summer reading programs, class or club visits, movie times, and activities with special guests.

## **8. Use of the Collection**

All children shall have access to all materials in the system. If a parent wishes to limit their child's access to Library materials, they should make this known to the child. The Library cannot withhold circulating materials from any patron, regardless of age. R-rated movies are restricted to patrons 18 years and older.

A parent, by co-signing the card (Library membership), recognizes that a card will be issued to their child and that the parent is responsible for the materials borrowed on the card.

A parent also accepts responsibility for any loss incurred through the use of the child's library card and ensures that the child will obey all rules and regulations of the Library.

## **9. Supervision**

The Library welcomes children of all ages, but it cannot be responsible for their safety or supervision. Parents are reminded that children may be at risk in a public place and should not be left unattended in or about the Library premises. In order to balance access to Library services by children of all ages with the need to make reasonable provision for their safety and well-being, this policy applies to children, according the following criteria:

- Children seven (7) and under must be accompanied by a parent while on Library premises.
- Children seven (7) and under attending Library programs must have a parent present in the Library in the event the child requires assistance. Some programs may be exempted from this rule and exemptions will be posted by Staff.
- Children, eight (8) to fourteen (14) will be assessed by Staff for their behaviour related to being unsupervised in the Library and Staff will advise parents if their child needs their assistance while on the premises.

Parents may find some of the material on the Internet inappropriate for their children. As with other Library materials, parents are expected to provide guidance and monitoring in its use. Any restriction of a child's access to the Internet is the responsibility of the parent.

In all cases, if the Staff believe a child is at risk, the Staff may contact the parent.

When an unattended child is found in the Library, and if the parent cannot be contacted by

phone or located within Library premises, Staff may contact the Perth County OPP at 519- 393-6123 or 1-888-310-1122 or Children's Aid Society (CAS) at 519-271-5290.

## **10. Library /School Liaison**

The information needs of school-aged children are influenced to a large extent by their school studies. Although the school library holds the primary responsibility for the provision of curriculum-related support material, the Library shall endeavour to provide additional resources and assistance when called upon. Cooperation and communication should exist between the Library staff and school staff to ensure that the best interests of children are served.

The Library can best acquaint students, teachers and school librarians with its resources and services by inviting classes to the Library for orientation visits.

Where time and staffing permit, visits to schools by Staff will reinforce the Library's informational and recreational relevance to children.

Staff should keep local schools informed of forthcoming child-oriented programs and activities

The Library's policy is to acquire a broad range of general information resources. It may occur that these materials meet the demands of school projects, but this is not the reason for their purchase. In view of the fact that the Library does not buy multiple copies of books for school projects, efforts are made to ensure that alternate sources such as website addresses and reference books are available.

The extent of help offered on school-related projects shall depend largely on the Staff's perception of the student's ability and willingness to use the Library resources, a judgment gained through a reference interview. This does not normally include the research for school projects which is expected to be part of the learning process. However, Staff will give necessary assistance required to enable students to find their own materials.

**History**

Date of Latest Board Approval: April 2014

Date(s) of Revision(s): March 2010

Date of next scheduled review: April 2017

**Related Documents**

Circulation and Services Policy

Collection Development Policy

Public Internet Use Policy

Rules of Conduct Policy

Teen Services Policy

Ontario Library Association's Children's Rights in the Public Library

[http://accessola2.com/data/5/rec\\_docs/319\\_Children%27s\\_Rights\\_in\\_the\\_Public\\_Library. pdf](http://accessola2.com/data/5/rec_docs/319_Children%27s_Rights_in_the_Public_Library.pdf)