

**GRAND VALLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY POLICY  
SAFETY OF CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY**

**Date of Review/Approved:** April 11, 2018  
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**Motion #: 7**

**Chair Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Safety of Children in the Library**

The Grand Valley Library staff recognizes that children of all ages have a right to a welcoming, respectful, supportive and safe environment when they visit the library. However, the library is a busy public place and library staff cannot assume responsibility for children left unattended within our public facility.

**1. Responsibilities of the Parent or Caregiver**

- a) Responsibility for the welfare and the behaviour of children using the library ultimately rests with the parent/guardian or an assigned caregiver.
  
- b) The library is governed by the terms in the Ontario *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA) with regards to supervision of children, and specifically these terms:

Section 79(3) "No person having charge of a child less than 16 years of age shall leave the child without making provision for his or her supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances

Section 79(4) "Where a person is charged with contravening Subsection (3) and the child is less than 10 years of age, the onus of establishing that the person made provision for the child's supervision and care that was reasonable in the circumstances rests with the person."

- c) The library expects parents, caregivers and teachers to:
  - i. not leave children requiring supervision unattended in or about library premises
  - ii. monitor the use of services by children under their care
  - iii. be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care
  
- d) Children under the age of five (5) attending programs, may be supervised by the library staff only during the scheduled time of the program; their caregivers must always remain in the library building.
  
- e) Children nine (9) years old and younger must be accompanied by an adult while in the Library.
  
- f) Children ages ten (10) and over are welcome to use the library independently on a regular basic, but parents are still responsible for the behavior of any children while they are in the Library

## 2: Responsibility of Staff

- a) The library staff members will be guided by this policy in situations, where
  - i. an unattended child is found frightened or crying in the library
  - ii. an unattended child is perceived to be endangering him/herself
  - iii. another person in the library poses a perceived threat to the unattended child
  - iv. an unattended child exhibits specific inappropriate behaviour
  - v. an unattended child is not met by a responsible caregiver at closing time
  - vi. a child is consistently left on his or her own in the library for long periods of time
- b) Where a responsible adult cannot be contacted, library staff will:
  - i. not leave a child unattended at closing time
  - ii. not give the child a ride home
  - iii. contact local police or Children's Aid Society (CAS)
  - iv. remain with the child until the proper authorities can take the child into their protection

## 3: Duty to Report

- a) The *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA) recognizes that each of us has a responsibility for the welfare of children. It clearly states that members of the public including professionals who work with children, have an 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.
- b) The duty to report applies to any child who is, or appears to be, under the age of 16 years. It also applies to children subject to a child protection order who are 16 and 17 years old.
- c) When library staff members have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, they will advise the Chief Executive Officer and together they will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the local CAS, as stated in the CFSA s.72 (1).

## Related Documents

Ontario's *Child and Family Services Act*. R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER C.11, s.72 (1).

Grand Valley Public Library Policy - ***Collection Development Policy***

Grand Valley Public Library Policy - ***Internet Services Policy***

Grand Valley Public Library Policy - ***Services of the Library***

