

## Topic: Children's & Teen's Services

### 2.8 Unattended Children Policy

Board Motion Number:	<b>24.063</b>
Date of Original Board Motion Number:	<b>February 27, 2024</b>
Date of Current Issue:	<b>June 25, 2024</b>
Date of Next Review:	<b>2028</b>
Attachments:	

Signature of Board Chairperson (and Date):

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The North Kawartha Public 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. The following policy establishes the conditions needed to maintain the well-being of children and the responsibilities of their caregivers.

#### Section 1: Responsibilities of the Parent or Caregiver

1. Responsibility for the welfare and the behaviour of children using the Library ultimately rests with the parent/guardian or an assigned caregiver.
2. The Library expects parents, caregivers and teachers to:
  - a. not leave children requiring supervision unattended in or about Library premises;
  - b. monitor the use of services and collections by children under their care;
  - c. be responsible for borrowed materials
  - d. be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care.
3. Children nine (9) years old and younger must be accompanied by an adult or an older caregiver, while in the Library.
4. Children under the age of five (5) and children between the ages of five to nine (5-9) attending programs, may be supervised by the Library staff only during the scheduled time of the program; their caregivers must remain within the Library. Exceptions may occur, following staff approval.

## Section 2: Responsibility of Staff

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

## Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 / Duty to Report

1. The **Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)** 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 CAS if they suspect that a child or youth under the age of 16 is or may be in need of protection.
2. 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.

Ontario's *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, S.O. 2017, c. 14, Sched. 1 requires that those who suspect that a child may be in need of protection from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse or neglect **must** report this suspicion to Family and Children's Services. Staff will advise the CEO and will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the local CAS, as stated in the **CYFSA** s.72 (1).

A staff member who suspects abuse must **not** tell a parent / caregiver or child about the suspicion and intention to report, or that a report has been made.

**Contacts:**

**Kawartha Haliburton Children's Aid Society 705-743-9751**

<https://www.khcas.on.ca>

**Peterborough County OPP 1-888-310-1122 (non-emergency line)**

**Ontario Government Website Page**

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/report-child-abuse-and-neglect>