

Policy Title:

## 25. Youth Services

Policy Type	Approval Date	Motion No.	Review Date
Operational	September 2023	013-2023	2026

### ***General Policy***

The Brockville Public Library (BPL) welcomes and encourages children and youth to use the Library and the full spectrum of services offered. BPL 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, delivered with consideration and respect.

BPL 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. See Appendices A and B.

### **Definitions and Scope**

For the purposes of this policy, youth are considered to be:

- Children: 0 to 7 years of age
- Tweens: 8 to 12 years of age
- Teens/Young Adults: 13 to 17 years of age

The topics covered in this policy are intended to meet the needs of youth as well as parents, guardians, caregivers and adults who work with youth and/or are interested in children's resources.

### **Staffing**

BPL will hire and employ qualified, knowledgeable, and personable individuals to work with youth.

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Staff (and volunteers) over 18 working with youth will be required to provide a clean Police Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening.

While Library staff will assist youth with finding resources, using the internet or attending programs, they will not assume the role of the parent/caregiver. Parents, guardians and caregivers are responsible for their children's use of the Library.

BPL will support staff attendance at workshops and conferences to keep their knowledge of youth services current and relevant.

### **Spaces and Resources**

BPL acknowledges that youth are best served by having their own distinct areas and collections. These areas will have furnishings, signs, displays and decorations that are appealing and functional for youth.

The youth areas are interactive learning environments where controlled noise levels are acceptable and where young customers are invited to explore Library resources in their own way.

The children, tween and young adult areas will be fully accessible.

Children, tweens and teens will each have their own distinct collections. All resources provided in the youth collections will meet the guidelines outlined in the Collection Development Policy - 13. Funds will be allocated to purchase materials for the youth collections on an annual basis.

There will be resources to satisfy information, as well as culture and recreation, to meet the needs of youth. In coordination with the entire Library collection, a balanced collection will include (but will not be limited to) the following resources: traditional, popular, Canadian, multicultural, bilingual, diverse, inclusive and accessible formats.

The resources provided will be housed in a well-organized manner allowing materials to be easily located and accessed.

### **Getting a Library Card**

Excerpts from Membership Policy – 14:

*The Brockville Public Library processes free library cards for all persons who live, own property or attend school in Brockville.*

*A person must be 14 years of age and over. Cards are available for individuals under 14 years of age.*

*Individuals from birth to 14 years of age must have a parent or legal guardian show identification and sign their library card. The parents/guardians of children under 14 are responsible for their child's fines, lost or damaged items. The parent's library account must be in good standing in order to sign for a child's library card.*

*Parents of children (under 14 years of age) may access information on their child's library account.*

*A second card may be issued to children (birth to 14 years of age) of divorced or separated parents, a separate card for use with each caregiver.*

See the complete Joining the Library Policy – 14 for further guidelines.

### **Information Services**

The guidelines outlined in our Information Services Policy – 16 apply to customers of all ages. BPL applies the principles of the Canadian Library Association's Statement on Intellectual Freedom to the provision of youth services.

Children have the right to intellectual freedom and are entitled to open access to all information and services throughout the Library.

1. All children will have equal access to the full range of resources available to others.
2. The full range of qualified staff skills, collections, equipment and methods will be utilized to answer all customer requests, regardless of age.
3. In accordance with the 1998 Ontario Library Association's Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual, staff will not censor material. This is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or caregiver.
4. All youth requests will be answered without judgment, with confidentiality and with respect.

### **Technology Services**

BPL provides youth with the opportunity to learn and develop technological skills.

Computer literacy and learning workstations, specifically designed for children in terms of

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content and accessible language, are available.

The Library provides unfiltered internet use for youth in accordance with the Brockville Public Library Board's current Internet Access and Use Policy - 18.

Excerpts from the Internet Access and Use Policy – 18:

*Children's access to the internet in the Library is the responsibility of parents and legal guardians.*

*Children under the age of 10 years old using the internet or wireless service must be accompanied by an adult. Children between the ages of 10 and 14 may use the internet without adult supervision but must have a library card, signed by a parent, as per Joining the Library Policy – 14.*

### **Programs and Community Outreach**

BPL will ensure that there are programs offered throughout the year for youth of all ages furthering their informational, cultural, educational and recreational interests. Some may be offered on a cost recovery basis.

The Library will actively reach out to community organizations, agencies and schools in order to promote collaboration around providing quality and integrated services for area youth.

Specific school outreach includes curriculum support and scheduling class visits.

Programs and outreach will also be designed to encourage parent/caregiver engagement.

Designated Library staff will be responsible for the development, implementation and supervision of all youth programming, under the direction of the CEO.

When feasible, programs may also be planned and organized with the input of the youth themselves.

Programs and outreach may include fundraising endeavours for youth spaces, collections, services and programs.

Publicity and marketing targeting the Library's youth services will appear in-Library, online and in the media.

See the Programming Policy - 19 for further programming and outreach guidelines.

**Children in the Library**

**(including responsibilities of the parent/caregiver, reporting child abuse and neglect, code of acceptable behaviour)**

Excerpt from Facility 30 – 8, Children in the Library Policy:

*The Brockville Public Library is dedicated to providing an accessible, inclusive, comfortable and welcoming environment in which everyone may meet and interact. BPL encourages children to use and enjoy the Library's facilities and services. BPL endorses the policy statement of the OLA concerning "Children's Rights in the Public Library" dated 1998. The safety of children, and especially unattended children, in the Library is of utmost importance.*

- 1. Responsibility for the behaviour and well-being of any child under the age of 18 who uses the Library rests with the parent/caregiver.*
- 2. Employees are not responsible for children in the Library.*
- 3. Children over the age of 10 are welcome to visit the Library and use the Library's resources provided that their behaviour is not disruptive to other Library customers and staff. The policy Facility 12 – 1: Code of Conduct | Respect for Others | Responsibility for Actions will apply to children over the age of 10.*
- 4. In all areas of the Library, children 10 years of age and under must be in the immediate vicinity of a parent/caregiver. The parent/caregiver of a child 10 years of age and under attending a Library program, which does not require the parent to be in attendance, must remain in the vicinity of the program room.*
- 5. The assigned caregiver must be at least 12 years old and carry emergency contact information.*
- 6. If a child 10 years of age and under is found unattended in the Library, either during hours of operation or at closing time, BPL employees will make every attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the facility. Library employees will make attempts to call the child's home phone number. If parent/caregiver direct contact cannot be made within one hour Library employees are obligated by the Ontario Child Youth Family Services Act, Section 72(1) to call the police or the Children's Aid Society. Employees must complete an Incident Report. See the Emergency and Safety Manual: Appendix A.*
- 7. If a particular child has been left unattended on previous occasions, and the parent/caregiver has already been informed of the Library's policy, the child may be asked to leave the Library for an extended period of time as deemed appropriate by*



*the senior Library staff on duty.*

- 8. *Library employees are required to notify the appropriate authorities if they have reason to suspect that there is evidence of child abuse and/or neglect. Ontario Child Youth Family Services Act, Section 72(1).*
- 9. *Under no circumstances is a Library employee to accompany an unattended child off the Library property.*

**Related Documents**

*Information Services Policy – 17 - A*

*Facility 30 – 1: Code of Conduct | Respect for Others | Responsibility for Actions*

*Collection Development Policy - 16*

*Joining the Library Policy – 14*

*Ontario Child Youth Family Services Act, Section 72(1).*

*Canadian Library Association’s Statement on Intellectual Freedom*

**Sources**

*Hanover Public Library*

*Huntsville Public Library*

**Policy History**

Review Date	Board Motion
October 2015	030-2015
September 2018	025-2018
October 2022	022-2022
September 2023	013-2023

**Appendix A: Ontario Library Association's Children's Rights in a Public 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 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.*