

Policy Type: **Operational**

Policy Number: **O-1**

Policy Title: **Children Unattended in the Library Policy**

Policy Approved: November 2021

Effective: January 2022 - December 2024

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## 1. PURPOSE

1.1 The Windsor Public Library Board recognizes that children have a right to a welcoming, respectful, innovative and safe environment when visiting the library. However, the Windsor Public Library cannot assume responsibility for children left unattended. The Windsor Public Library Children Unattended in the Library Policy establishes the conditions needed to maintain the well-being of children plus the responsibilities of their caregivers.

## 2. SCOPE

2.1 The Windsor Public Library Board within the meaning of the [Public Libraries Act, R.S.O.1990, C.P44](#) as amended 2019, CH14, Sched.12, provides governance and management of public library services in Windsor, and is supported by the Windsor Public Library / City of Windsor Service Agreement (2015), as amended March 21, 2017.

2.2 The Windsor Public Library Board endorses the [Ontario Child and Family Services Act \(CFSA\)](#) with regard to the supervision of children.

- a) Section 72(1) "Despite the provisions of any other Act, if a person, including a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect one of the following, the person shall forthwith report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to a society."
- b) 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."
- c) 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."

The Windsor Public Library Board also endorses the [OLA Children's Rights in the Public Library](#) and [OLA Teen Rights in the Library](#) statements.

2.3 The Children Unattended in the Library Policy reflects the Windsor Public Library Mission, Vision, Values Statement and Customer Service Pledge:

**Windsor Public Library Vision Statement** "The Windsor Public Library makes our community a better place to live, work and raise a family."

**Windsor Public Library Vision Statement - Community** "We are committed to a strong and healthy Windsor."

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2.4 This policy applies to all Windsor Public Library customers, employees and volunteers.

### **3. GUIDELINES**

3.1 Responsibility for the welfare, actions and behaviour of children using the Windsor Public Library ultimately rests with the parent/legal guardian or an assigned caregiver.

- a) Children under the age of 10 must be accompanied by an adult or caregiver while in the Library;
- b) Children aged 10 and over are welcome to use the library independently, but parents are still responsible for their actions and behaviour while in the library;
- c) Parents must ensure that children requiring supervision are accompanied at the library by a responsible caregiver;
- d) Parents or caregivers are responsible for supervising their child's access to all library resources including the Internet and Technology Hubs;
- e) If the parent or caregiver cannot be contacted within 10 minutes after closing, employees will notify the Windsor Police Services.

3.2 The Children Unattended in the Library Policy covers the following situations:

- a) An unattended/abandoned/unsupervised child;
- b) An unattended child found frightened, crying, asking for assistance or perceived to be endangering him/herself;
- c) An individual poses a perceived threat to an unattended child;
- d) An unattended child exhibits inappropriate actions or behaviour.

3.3 Children found unattended in the library will be helped and this may include contacting parents, caregivers, schools, the Windsor Police Services or the Children's Aid Society for assistance.

3.4 Responsibility of Windsor Public Library Employees.

Where a responsible adult cannot be contacted, library employees will:

- a) Not leave a child unattended;
- b) Not give the child a ride home, or walk the child home;
- c) Contact Windsor Public Library management, Windsor Police Service and / or Children's Aid Society (CAS) and remain with the child until authorities can take the child into their protection.