



## REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

JANUARY 23, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Unattended Children  
**PURPOSE:** For Approval  
**PREPARED BY:** Customer Service & Branch Operations Staff  
**PRESENTED BY:** Nancy Collister – Director, Customer Service & Branch Operations

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### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Library Board approve the revisions to the Unattended Children Policy

### BACKGROUND

The Unattended Children Policy establishes the roles of Library Employees and Caregivers regarding children left unattended on Library Property or at Library events conducted away from Library Property. The Library's intent is to balance access to Library services by children of all ages with their safety and well-being and to adhere to legislation included in the Library's Charter of Library Use, including the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*.

The current policy, a list of significant revisions, and the revised policy are appended.

### NEXT STEPS

This policy will be reviewed in four years as part of the Library's policy review process.

## CURRENT POLICY

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the roles of Library Employees and Caregivers regarding Children left Unattended on London Public Library (Library) Property or at Library events conducted away from Library Property. The Library's intent is to balance access to Library services by Children of all ages with their safety and well-being.

### SCOPE:

This policy applies to all caregivers (as defined below) of children who are under twelve (12) years of age, in all locations of the Library.

### DEFINITIONS:

- **Caregiver** means parents, guardians, caregivers, older siblings, or relatives who are directly responsible for the care and wellbeing of the Child, while in London Public Library.
- **Child/Children** means all persons who are under twelve (12) years of age.
- **Competency** means the ability of the Child to accept social cues, be responsible for his/her own functions and behaviour and accept the direction of Employees.
- **Library Property** means land and buildings owned or leased by the Library and anything attached to the land, such as a bench or shed.
- **Unattended** means a Child left without visible supervision by a Caregiver within London Public Library.

### POLICY STATEMENT:

Children of all ages are welcome in the Library and are encouraged to enjoy materials, services, programs and spaces. While the Library aims to provide a safe environment for all users, Caregivers are responsible for providing supervision and care of their Children while the Child is on Library Property.

### Responsibility of Caregiver:

- Responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of Children using the Library ultimately rests with Caregivers. The Library expects Caregivers to:
  - monitor the use of services and resources by Children;
  - ensure their Children behave appropriately according to the *Rules of Conduct*.

- Children who are seven (7) years of age or under must be accompanied by a Caregiver while inside the Library.
  - Children who are seven (7) years of age or under attending programs must have a Caregiver present nearby inside the Library. At the Central Library, the Caregiver must remain in sight of the Child; i.e. on the same floor or in the Children's Library.
  - Where Library programs and events are held away from Library Property, the Caregiver must remain in sight of Children who are seven (7) years of age or under at all times.
  - Children who are eight (8) to eleven (11) years of age will be assessed by Library Employees for their competency if Unattended inside the Library. Employees will advise Caregivers if their Child needs caregiver assistance while on the premises.

#### **Responsibility of Library Employees:**

- Library Employees will follow this policy in all situations where an Unattended Child is found inside the Library.
- It is the responsibility of Library Employees to locate and advise Caregivers when Children are left Unattended inside the Library. Employees cannot care for Children left Unattended. Employees will take the appropriate action, including contacting the Child's family, London Police Services or the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, as required.

#### **Accountabilities:**

- Accountability for application of this policy is vested in the office of the CEO & Chief Librarian by the London Public Library Board (the "Board"). The CEO & Chief Librarian is responsible for the development and application of procedures and guidelines and for adherence to applicable legislation. This responsibility may be delegated to qualified and knowledgeable Employees.
- Accountability for the setting of this policy resides with the Library Board. The Board will ensure that:
  - The policy is applied in the context of the governance policy framework of the Library;
  - The terms of the policy are applied;
  - The CEO & Chief Librarian establishes management processes, procedures and guidelines; and
  - The CEO & Chief Librarian acts in accordance with the policy.
- Concerns about this policy may be addressed to the Library Board through the delegation process.

**BACKGROUND:**

The *Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, SO 2017, c 14, Sched 1, s 136(3) states:

No person having charge of a child less than sixteen years of age shall leave the child without making provision for his or her supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances.

**INQUIRIES:**

Director, Customer Services and Branch Operations

CEO & Chief Librarian

## **SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES**

### **Addition to definition of Caregiver**

A Caregiver is anyone thirteen (13) years of age to whom the parent/guardian has given responsibility for the care of younger Child.

### **Responsibility of Caregiver**

Changed from the Caregiver must remain “in sight of the Child” To: “with the child at all times, including participating in programs.”, for both on-site and off-site programs.

### **Responsibility of Library Employees**

Added: “If a Child is left at the library at closing time, or in the event of an emergency or closure, the staff person in charge will attempt to contact the parent, guardian or Caregiver. If they cannot be contacted within 15 minutes, staff will notify the police.”

## REVISED POLICY

### PURPOSE:

To establish the roles of Library Employees and Caregivers regarding children left unattended on London Public Library (Library) Property or at Library events conducted away from Library Property. The Library's intent is to balance access to Library services by children of all ages with their safety and well-being and to adhere to legislation included in the Library's Charter of Library Use, including the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*.

### SCOPE:

This policy applies to all Caregivers (as defined below) of Children who are under twelve (12) years of age, in all locations of the Library.

### DEFINITIONS:

- **Caregiver** means parents, guardians, Caregivers, older siblings, or relatives who are directly responsible for the care and wellbeing of the Child, while in London Public Library. A Caregiver is anyone thirteen (13) years of age to whom the parent/guardian has given responsibility for the care of younger Child.
- **Child/Children** means all persons who are under twelve (12) years of age.
- **Competency** means the ability of the Child to accept social cues, be responsible for their own functions and behaviour and accept the direction of Employees.
- **Library Employee** means a person who is employed by the Library and includes all Employees, including Page and Casual staff.
- **Library Property** means land and buildings owned or leased by the Library and anything attached to the land, such as a bench or shed.
- **Unattended** means a Child left without visible supervision by a Caregiver within London Public Library.

### POLICY STATEMENT:

Children of all ages are welcome in the Library and are encouraged to enjoy our collections, services, programs and spaces. While the Library aims to provide a safe environment for all users, Caregivers are responsible for providing supervision and care of their Children while the Child is on Library Property.

### Responsibility of Caregiver:

- Responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of Children using the Library ultimately rests with Caregivers. The Library expects Caregivers to:
  - monitor the use of services and resources by Children;
  - ensure their Children behave appropriately according to the *Rules of Conduct*.
  
- Children who are seven (7) years of age or under must be accompanied by a Caregiver while inside the Library.
  - Children who are seven (7) years of age or under attending programs must have a Caregiver with them at all times, including participating in programs.
  - Where Library programs and events are held away from Library Property, the Caregiver must remain with the Child while participating in the event/program.
  - Children who are eight (8) to eleven (11) years of age will be assessed by Library Employees for their competency if unattended inside the Library. Employees will advise Caregivers if their Child needs Caregiver assistance while on the premises.

#### **Responsibility of Library Employees:**

- Library Employees will follow this policy in all situations where an unattended Child is found inside the Library.
  
- It is the responsibility of Library Employees to locate and advise Caregivers when Children are left unattended inside the Library. Employees cannot care for Children left unattended. Employees will take the appropriate action, including contacting the Child's family, London Police Services or the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, as required.
  
- If a Child is left at the library at closing time, or in the event of an emergency or closure, the staff person in charge will attempt to contact the parent, guardian or Caregiver. If they cannot be contacted within 15 minutes, staff will notify the police.

#### **Accountabilities:**

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**INQUIRIES:**

Director, Customer Services and Branch Operations

CEO & Chief Librarian