

Unattended Children Policy

Effective Date: January 23, 2025

Review: January 2029

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 or older to whom the parent/guardian has given responsibility for the care of a 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 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:

- 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.

INQUIRIES:

Director, Customer Services and Branch Operations

CEO & Chief Librarian