



Section of Policy Manual: Services	Policy No. : SER-02
Subject: Children's Services	Policy Approval Date: October 12, 2017
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### **Section 1: Purpose**

Gravenhurst Public Library strives to meet the needs of all people in Gravenhurst. The Library recognizes the importance of children in their own right. To ensure that the Library is upholding its mandate and aiding in the stimulation of intellectual growth and cultural appreciation of children, the Library will: strive to provide appropriate children's materials, reference and reader guidance, resources, programming, and general services to children. This policy will discuss the above services in further detail.

### **Section 2: Scope**

To ensure that the needs of the children of Gravenhurst are met, this policy will discuss the services and materials available to every child ages 0-12 in Gravenhurst. In addition, these guidelines are applicable to parents, guardians, caregivers, adults who work with children, and adults who are interested in children's materials.

### **Section 3: Rights of Children in the Library**

Gravenhurst Public Library upholds the Ontario Library Association's position on children's rights in the Public Library. According to OLA, Children in Public Libraries have the right to:

- a) Intellectual Freedom;
- b) Equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users;
- c) A full range of materials, services, and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their needs;
- d) Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use, and local community needs;



- e) A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages;
- f) Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in children's services;
- g) Welcoming, respectful, supportive service from birth through transition to adult user;
- h) 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;
- i) Library policies written to include the needs of the child.

#### **Section 4: Services**

1. Gravenhurst and Muskoka residents of all ages have the right to a Gravenhurst Public Library card, with the following guidelines for children.
  - a) All children ages 0-12 may be issued their own membership card with the understanding that the parent or guardian accepts responsibility for its use;
  - b) According to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, section 54.c, parents or guardians may obtain access to information regarding which materials children currently have checked out.
2. All children without a public library card will have equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users (with the exception of checking materials out).
3. Gravenhurst Public Library offers a variety of services to children, parents, guardians, caregivers, adults who work with children, and adults who are interested in children's materials. These services include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Class visits;
  - b) Group visits;
  - c) Regular programming;
  - d) Readers' advisory and reference specifically in regards to children's materials;
  - e) Outreach into the community.



## **Section 5: Collections**

1. A comprehensive children's collection based on the Collection Development Policy MAT-01 will be maintained. These collections will include:
  - a) Materials that meet high standards of quality, including reviewed and award winning materials;
  - b) Materials that reflect current children's, community, and societal trends, as well as materials that can be considered to have permanent or contemporary value, including materials that could be considered "classics";
  - c) Materials designed to aid in reading comprehension and literacy development;
  - d) Materials that represent a large range of mediums, including print, non-print materials, and age appropriate formats;
  - e) Materials that complement the local school curriculum

## **Section 6: Reference and Readers' Advisory**

1. Staff will provide reference and readers' advisory using a wide range of skills, tools, and methods. These include digital and print readers' advisory tools as well as personal experience with the materials in the Library;
2. Staff will strive to better understand the request of the patron by using a variety of methods, including conducting readers' advisory interviews;
3. Regardless of the age of the requester, all questions and requests placed upon staff should be answered in a professional, non-judgemental, non-biased or censored manner, using confidentiality and respect;
4. When appropriate, staff will point out a variety of resources available throughout all areas of the Library. These include, but are not limited to, print, non-print, and digital resources;
5. When appropriate, staff will teach patrons how to better utilize the Library's materials, including demonstrating how to find materials, how to use the catalogue, and how to access digital resources both at home and in the Library.



## **Section 7: Advocacy for Children**

1. Staff members take an active role in child advocacy through community outreach and partnerships. In order to ensure that children have a voice in their community, staff will:
  - a) Network and provide outreach throughout the community to ensure that children and guardians are aware of the services available to them at the Library;
  - b) Collaborate with agencies to promote and foster early literacy, love of reading, lifelong learning, and children's health and well-being;
  - c) Seek support for children's services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc;
  - d) Advocate for children's services to the Library Board;
  - e) Maintain open communication with principals, teachers, and teacher librarians within the community;
  - f) Welcome class visits and orientation for school children and home schooled children.
  
2. To ensure the safety of children in the Gravenhurst community, the entire staff at the Gravenhurst Public Library abides by the *Ontario Child and Family Services Act*. Section 72.1 of the act states that a person who performs professional and official duties with respect to children, must report any suspicions regarding neglect, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of children. These suspicions must be reported promptly and immediately by the individual who witnesses or suspects that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed.

## **Section 8: Staffing**

1. The Library will ensure that all staff members receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable library service to children, including readers' advisory and reference services.
  
2. The Library Board will support ongoing staff training and professional development in children's services.



3. Staff are never responsible for children in the Library. All browsing of materials, access to information, and use of the Library by children is the parents' or guardians' responsibility.
4. At least one staff member will oversee children's programming and collections. In addition, the Library may hire summer staff to focus on children's summer programming.
  - a) Children's staff members will have a desire to work with children and will have expertise in bringing materials and children together;
  - b) Children's staff members will have a commitment to ongoing training and professional development;
  - c) Children's staff members will be qualified, knowledgeable, and personable individuals.

### **Section 9: Programming**

1. Gravenhurst Public Library recognizes their role in educating and enlightening the community. Specifically, the Library strives to make literacy fun and exciting for children. As such, the Library will provide programming specifically for children and parents.
2. All children's programming will be facilitated by trained Library staff or appropriate and trained partner groups.
3. All Library programs are to be engaging, literacy based, and age appropriate. As such, programs are tailored to applicable attention spans, developmental stages, and manual dexterity. Depending on age, Library programs will emphasize early childhood literacy, library orientation, and encourage reading for leisure, or highlight various aspects of the collection.
4. Children's programs will include:
  - a) Educational programs for parents/ guardians, adults, and caregivers with a focus on the importance of early literacy, the role of the library in their children's lives, and the support the library can offer them;
  - b) Programs for classes, children's groups, and daycares. These programs will emphasize early literacy and library orientation, and will encourage reading for leisure, or highlight various aspects of the collection;



- c) Programs for summer, school breaks, and professional development days will be primarily book based and will highlight various aspects of our collection while encouraging reading for pleasure or leisure activities.
5. To ensure the success of the programs, some programs may require registration, or may limit the age of children, or the number of children per accompanying adult. Leniency may be given to parents of more than one child.

### **Section 10: Technology Services**

1. Gravenhurst Public Library provides children with access to technology. Filtered computers are located within the children's section for children's use.
2. Access to technology within the Library is governed in regards to the Internet Access Policy. Guidelines specific to children include:
  - a) Parents or legal guardians must assume responsibility for deciding what Library resources are appropriate for their own children. Parents or legal guardians should guide their children in use of the Internet and inform them about materials they should not use;
  - b) The Library will make available resources to aid parents in guiding their children in use of the Internet;
  - c) Children less than 10 years of age can access the early literacy machines in the children's section;
  - d) Children less than 10 years of age must be accompanied by an adult when using the public access computers or the wifi;
  - e) Children ages 0-12 must have their parent or guardian complete and return the Gravenhurst Public Library Computer and Internet use Permission Form before they are allowed to make use of the Library's computer and internet resources.

### **Section 11: Library Space**

1. The Library is committed to providing dedicated space to children. These spaces will be comfortable, welcoming, and visually stimulating so that children can easily distinguish that the space is designed for them. These spaces will have a place for individual reading as well as collaborative space for group learning. The Library recognizes that these spaces are for learning and growth, and as such controlled noise levels are acceptable and young patrons are



invited to explore the Library resources in their own way. The following will be taken into account in the children's space:

- a) Appropriate children's materials will be made easily available within the children's space;
- b) All shelving, furniture, and seating will be designed for and accessible to children of all ages;
- c) The Library will ensure that the signage is clear and age appropriate.

### **Section 12: Unattended Children in the Library**

1. According to the *Ontario Child and Family Services Act* 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." The Library is a public place and parents/ guardians are responsible for their children's supervision at all times. At no point are children the responsibility of Library staff.
2. While all people regardless of age are welcome in the Library, children less than 10 years of age must not be left unattended in the Library.

### **Section 13: Conduct Behaviour**

1. Children are expected to follow the Library's Rules of Conduct Policy. Parents are responsible for the behaviour of their children while they are in the Library. The Library recognizes that the children's space is a place of learning and collaboration. As such, controlled noise levels are acceptable. Library staff will intervene and stop a child from a behaviour if:
  - a) It effects the enjoyment of the Library for others;
  - b) It disrupts a program;
  - c) It presents a dangerous situation for that patron, any other patron, or staff;
  - d) It effects Library equipment, Library furniture, or a Library facility.