



Draft

Section of Policy Manual: Services	Policy No. : SER-03
Subject: Teen/Youth Services	Policy Approval Date: Date first approved: October 12, 2017
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Section 1: Purpose

The Gravenhurst Public Library is committed to meeting the needs of all people in Gravenhurst. The Library recognizes the importance of teens 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 teens, the library will: strive to provide appropriate teen materials, reference and reader guidance, resources, programming, and general services to teens. This policy will discuss the above services in further detail.

Section 2: Scope

To ensure that the needs of the teens of Gravenhurst are met, this policy will discuss the services and materials available to teens ages 13-18. In addition, these guidelines are applicable to parents, guardians, caregivers, adults who work with teens, and adults who are interested in teen materials.

Section 3: Rights of Teens

Gravenhurst Public Library upholds the Ontario Library Association's (OLA) position on teen rights in the Public Library. According to the OLA, teens in Public Libraries have the right to:

- a) Intellectual Freedom;
- b) Equal access to the full range of materials, services, and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their unique needs;
- c) Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use, and local community needs;
- d) Collections that specifically meet the needs of teens;
- e) A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages;



- f) Welcoming, respectful, supportive service at every service point;
- g) Library programs and services appropriate for teens;
- h) Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in teen services;
- i) 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;
- j) Library policies that are written to include the needs of teens.

Section 4: Services

1. Gravenhurst and other Muskoka residents of all ages have the right to a Gravenhurst Public Library card, with the following guidelines for teens:
 - a) Teens ages 13 and above may be issued their own membership card without the permission of their parents or guardians, with the understanding that said teen is responsible for the use of the card;
 - 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 teens less than 16 years of age currently have checked out.
2. All teens without a public library card will have equal access to the services and materials available to other users (with the exception of checking materials out).
3. Gravenhurst Public Library offers a variety of services to teens, parents, guardians, caregivers, adults who work with teens, and adults who are interested in teen materials. These services include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Group visits;
 - b) Class visits;
 - c) Special programming;
 - d) Readers advisory and reference specifically in regards to teen materials;
 - e) Volunteer opportunities.



Section 5: Collections

1. A comprehensive teen 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 teen, 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 that represent a range of mediums, including print materials, non-print materials, and digital resources;

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 should 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.
6. When appropriate, staff will direct patrons to resources and materials that support and complement the Ontario school curriculum.



Section 7: Advocacy for Teens

1. Staff members take an active role in teen advocacy through community outreach and partnerships. In order to ensure that teens have a voice in their community, staff members will:
 - a) Network and provide outreach throughout the community to ensure that teens and guardians are aware of the services available to them at the library;
 - b) Collaborate with agencies to contribute to teens' health and well-being and to promote literacy, love of reading, and lifelong learning;
 - c) Seek support for teens' services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc.;
 - d) Advocate for teen services to the board;
 - e) Maintain open communication with principals, teachers, and teacher librarians within the community;
 - f) Welcome class visits;
 - g) Ensure that teens have an active voice in library programs.
 - h) Ensure that teens have a safe space to be themselves.
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 and teens must report any suspicions regarding neglect, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of teens less than 16 years of age. These suspicions must be reported promptly and immediately by the individual who witnesses or suspects that a teen 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, including readers' advisory and reference services to teens.
2. The Library Board will support ongoing staff training and professional development in teens' services.



3. Staff are never responsible for teens in the library. All browsing of materials, access to information, and use of the library by teens is the parents' or guardians' responsibility.
4. At least one staff member will oversee teen programming and collections. This staff member will:
 - a) Have a desire to work with teens and will have expertise in bringing materials and teens together;
 - b) Have a commitment to ongoing training and professional development;
 - c) Be qualified, knowledgeable, and personable individuals.

Section 9: Programming

1. Gravenhurst Public Library recognizes its role in educating and enlightening the community. As such, the Library strives to make information accessible and exciting for teens. Therefore, the Library will provide programming specifically for teens.
2. All teen programming will be facilitated by trained Library staff or partner groups.
3. The Library will ensure that teens will be involved in planning and implementing programs for this age group.
4. Teen programs will include:
 - a) Programs that reflect the Library's Programming Values as outlined in Section 2 of the Programming Policy (SER-13).
 - b) Programs that will educate teens on the importance of literacy, information accuracy, the role of the library in their lives, and the support the library can offer them.
 - c) Programs for classes and teen groups. These programs will emphasize information and library orientation, and will encourage reading for leisure, or highlight various aspects of the collection. To ensure the success of the programs, some programs may require registration, and/or may limit the number or the age of teens.



Section 10: Technology Services

1. Gravenhurst Public Library provides teens with access to technology. Teens may access unfiltered computers located within the adult section.
2. Access to technology within the library is governed in regards to the Internet Access Policy (SER-11). Guidelines specific to teens include:
 - a) Parents or legal guardians must assume responsibility for deciding what Library resources are appropriate for their own teens. Parents or legal guardians should guide their teens 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 teens in use of the Internet.
 - c) Teens may utilize the computers and internet resources without parental or guardian permission. Teens must abide by the Internet Access Policy (SER-11) when utilizing the Library's computers and internet resources.

Section 11: Library Space

1. The Library is committed to providing dedicated space to teens. This space will be comfortable, welcoming, and visually stimulating so that teens can easily distinguish that the space is designed for them. This space will have a place for individual reading as well as space for collaboration. The Library recognizes that these spaces are for learning and growth, and as such controlled noise levels are acceptable and teens are invited to explore the Library resources in their own way. The following will be taken into account in the teen space:
 - a) Appropriate teen materials in a variety of formats will be made easily available within the teen space, including fiction and non-fiction materials and utilizing a variety of formats regarding various subjects;
 - b) The teen area will have clear signage that is visually appealing to teens;
 - c) All shelving, seating, and furniture will be designed for and accessible to teens.



Section 12: Unattended Teens/Youth 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 sixteen 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 supervision of teens less than 16 years of age at all times. At no point are teens the responsibility of Library staff.
2. To this end, the library expects parents, caregivers and teachers to:
 - a. not leave youth under 16, requiring supervision, unattended in or about library premises
 - b. monitor the use of services by youth under their care
 - c. be responsible for the appropriate behavior of youth under their care
3. Responsibility of Staff
 - a. Library staff members will be guided by this policy and will intervene in situations, where:
 - i. an unattended youth is found frightened or crying in the library
 - ii. an unattended youth is perceived to be endangering themselves or other library users
 - iii. another person in the library poses a perceived threat to the unattended youth
 - iv. an unattended youth exhibits specific inappropriate behavior
 - b. Where a responsible adult cannot be contacted, library staff will:
 - i. not give the youth a ride home
 - ii. contact local police or Children's Aid Society (CAS)
 - iii. remain with the distressed youth until the proper authorities can take the youth into their protection

Section 13: Conduct Behaviour

1. Teens are expected to follow the Library's Rules of Conduct Policy. The Library recognizes that the teen space is a place of learning and collaboration. As such, controlled noise levels are acceptable. Library staff will intervene and stop a teen from a behaviour if:
 - a) It affects 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 affects library equipment, library furniture, or the library facility.

Related Documents

Government of Ontario. ***Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act***, section 54.c

Government of Ontario. ***Ontario Child and Family Services Act***. Section 72.1

GPL Policy ***GOV-09 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion***

GPL Policy ***SER-13 Programming***

GPL Policy ***MAT-01 Collection Development***

GPL Policy ***PAT-05 Children's Program Code of Conduct***

GPL Policy ***SER-11 Internet Access***

GPL Policy ***PAT-03 Patron Code of Conduct***