



Youth Conduct and Safety in the Library Policy

Approved by: Eastern Counties Regional Library Board

Approved Date: March 29, 2018

Effective Date: February 1, 2019

Eastern Counties Regional Library (ECRL) welcomes youth to enjoy its programs, services and spaces. Staff work to engage youth in positive ways, and provide support and guidance while they are in the library. Like other library users, youth are expected to comply with library policies, taking into account their age and maturity. Parents and caregivers are responsible for the conduct and safety of their youth in the library.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for library staff and volunteers in working with youth, as well as to outline parent/guardian responsibilities for the conduct and safety of their children in the library.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- a "youth" is a person eighteen years of age or younger, unless otherwise specified.
- a "parent" is a person who is either the natural, adoptive, or foster parent of the youth.
- a "guardian" is a person with legal responsibility for the care and custody of a youth.
- a "caregiver" is anyone age 12 years or older to whom the parent/guardian has given responsibility for the care of the younger child.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility for Youth Conduct and Safety

Library staff cannot accept responsibility for the safety and supervision of youth.

Parents/guardians are responsible for the conduct and safety of their youth in the library as outlined below:

- Parents/guardians must ensure that children requiring supervision are brought to the library with a responsible caregiver.
- Children under age 8 must be attended by a parent, guardian, or caregiver at the library.

- Youth age 8 and over may use the library unattended for an amount of time appropriate to their age and maturity.
- Parents, guardians and caregivers must inform themselves of scheduled library closing times, and be aware that youth may sometimes need to leave the library unexpectedly – e.g. due to emergencies. It is the responsibility of parents, guardians and caregivers to let their youth know what they should do if they must leave the library.

Guidelines for Staff and Library Volunteers Working with Youth

Staff and library volunteers are responsible for their actions and behavior when interacting with children and teens and should avoid any conduct that would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions. For the protection of youth, and themselves, staff and volunteers will follow Youth Conduct and Safety in the Library Procedures when working with youth.

Addressing Conduct and Safety Concerns with Unattended Youth in the Library

Library staff will follow the Youth Conduct and Safety in the Library Procedure when parents/guardians or caregivers are not present to:

- supervise children under age 8 who have entered the library without a caregiver present
- assist a youth who requires help or intervention from a parent/guardian/caregiver
- assist a youth who cannot leave the library independently
- address issues with youth behavior resulting in a youth being asked to leave or barred

If Library staff notice and feel that the safety of any unaccompanied child is in doubt the staff will attempt to contact a parent or legal guardian. If this is not successful, a staff member will notify a community agency responsible for the care and well-being of children. Such agencies may include police or the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services (Child Welfare Division).

Unattended youth who are disrupting use of the library space may be asked to leave in accordance with the Asking Customers to Leave and/or Barring Future Use Policy and Procedure. The Chief Librarian will gladly meet with parents and youth whose use of the library has been barred, in order to develop a plan for reestablishing their access to the library and its services.

Requests for Information Regarding Youth

Library staff will follow the **Customer Confidentiality Policy** when handling requests for, and/or sharing, information about youth, their library use or records.

Questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures please contact the Chief Librarian at 902-747-2597.