



AURORA PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety, well-being, and protection of all children who visit or participate in programs at Aurora Public Library. The library is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive, and secure environment for children, in alignment with Ontario child protection laws and library service standards.

Library policies and services are designed to provide a safe and welcoming environment for customers of all ages, but a parent/guardian or an assigned caregiver need to use the same caution with their children at the library as they would in any other public setting.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

This policy aligns with:

- **Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA)**
- **Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)**
- **Ontario Human Rights Code**
- Other relevant provincial and municipal child protection and privacy regulations.

Definitions

- **Child/Children:** Any person under the age of 18.
- **Parent/Guardian:** A person with legal responsibility for a child.
- **Unattended Child:** A child who is in the library premises or at a library program without a responsible adult or caregiver.
- **Caregiver:** A responsible person aged 12 or older entrusted by a parent or guardian with the care of a child.

Library Responsibilities

Aurora Public Library is responsible for:

- Maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for children and families.
- Providing child-appropriate spaces and materials.
- Ensuring all staff have completed:
 - Vulnerable Sector Screening
 - Orientation and training in child protection and appropriate conduct
- Responding promptly and appropriately to safety concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect.

Parental and Caregiver Responsibilities

Responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of Children using the library ultimately rests with Parents/Legal Guardians, or with a Caregiver chosen by the legal guardian. The library expects Caregivers to: monitor the use of services and resources by Children; ensure their Children behave appropriately while in the library.

Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for:

- Supervising their children at all times while in the library.
- Ensuring children under the age of **10** are not left unattended.
- Making appropriate arrangements for the timely pickup of all children after programs and before library closing hours.

Unattended Children

The library has procedures in place for the protection of unattended children.

Missing Children

The library has procedures in place in the event of a missing child being reported.

Child and Youth Programs

- All library programs for children will be conducted by trained staff or partners.
- Partner-run programs will have a trained and screened staff member assigned to assist.
- Caregivers are required to stay for certain age groups.
- Certain programs require caregiver attendance, regardless of the age of the child.
- Caregivers are required to stay in the library during programs for children 10 and under.

Disruptive Behaviour

- Children, like all library customers, are expected to comply with the Aurora Public Library's Rules of Conduct. Disruptive or inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated.
- If a child is disruptive and exhibits inappropriate behaviour, library staff may ask the child and the caregiver to leave the library. In the absence of a caregiver, the staff may contact the parent or guardian or local authorities.

Requests for Information Regarding Children or Teens

As a public facility, the library does not monitor the activities of its customers of any age unless there is a problem with their conduct. If a child is noticed to be spending multiple days in the library during school hours, staff may check with the child and ask that a parent or guardian confirm with the library that they are aware of the child's whereabouts or contact Children's Aid Society for guidance if there are concerns about the child's well-being.

Staff will not give information to any person over the telephone as to whether a child is currently in the library or has been in the library recently. Staff may offer to take a message and ask the child (if present in the library) to call the person back.

Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect

Under the Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, there is a legal obligation for individuals to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Section 125 of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, states that any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection must promptly report their suspicion and the information upon which it is based, to a Children's Aid Society. The duty to report applies to anyone who is, or appears to be, under the age of 16 years.

Someone who is concerned that a 16- or 17-year-old is, or may be in need of protection, may make a report to a Children's Aid Society.

When staff have reasonable grounds to suspect that someone is or may need protection, the staff member will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based, to a Children's Aid Society, as stated in the Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act, s.125(1). The library will support the staff member in fulfilling this duty. A Major Incident Report will be completed.

Related Policies

1. APLB Code of Conduct
2. Children's Rights in the Public Library
3. CLA Statement on Teen's Rights in the Library

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