

## **Purpose**

West Perth Public Library recognizes that the needs of young people are important in their own right. Their intellectual growth, cultural appreciation and recreational activities are fostered through quality library service, and delivered with consideration and respect. This policy outlines the resources for youth in the Library, and responsibilities relating to safety, respect and confidentiality, and missing children.

West Perth Public Library provides resources based on the principles stated in the Ontario Library Association's *Teens Rights in the Public Library*, as adopted at the OLA Annual General Meeting June 2010.

## **Resources**

### Collections

- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designate ensures the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive teen/young adult collection based on the Library's *Collections* policy.
- Collections for teens/young adults reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of youth as well as societal trends.
- Library staff develop the collections to include:
  - Canadian authors and content;
  - award-winning titles;
  - age-appropriate formats.

### Reference and Readers Advisory

- Library staff will utilize the full range of collections, technologies and other resources to answer users' requests for information, regardless of age and without judgment, with confidentiality and respect.
- Library staff will highlight the variety of resources available in all areas of the Library as appropriate.

## Programs

- The Library will provide programming for youth, both in and out of the Library, to stimulate creative potential and to encourage and facilitate the habit of reading, independent learning and use of the Library.
- The Library will provide educational, entertaining and literacy-related programs and support for youth that will highlight various aspects of our collection, while encouraging reading for pleasure or leisure activities.
- Library staff will actively involve youth in planning and implementing programs for this age group.
- The number of participants for all programs will be restricted based on size of the facility, fire safety recommendations, staff supervision available, and other relevant factors. This will be enforced by the library staff member in charge.

## **Library Space**

The Library will provide a space for youth that is distinct from the adult area. This area will have furniture, shelves and equipment designed for youth and which are fully accessible. The area will be an interactive learning environment where controlled noise levels are accepted.

The Library will ensure that signage is clear and age-appropriate.

## **Staffing**

The Library Board supports ongoing staff training and professional development in providing resources for youth. The CEO will ensure that staff members assigned to youth resources receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable library service.

Library staff will advocate for youth resources in the community by:

- collaborating with agencies to promote a love of reading, life long learning and youth's health and well-being;
- seeking support for youth resources from community organizations, fundraising, donations and partnerships;
- communicating with local school staff members;
- promoting library resources to groups who could benefit from them.

## **Safety of Teens in the Library**

West Perth Public Library staff recognizes that people of all ages have a right to a welcoming, respectful and supportive library space. As a public facility, the Library does not monitor the activities of its patrons on- or off-site unless there is a concern about

conduct as outlined in the *Code of Conduct* policy, or a person under the age of twelve (12) years is left alone as outlined in the *Children and the Library* policy.

### Missing Persons

- Library staff will not give information to any person regarding whether or not an individual is currently in the Library, or has been in the Library recently. Library staff may offer to take a message for an individual to contact a caregiver if or when they are spotted in the Library. In the case of a missing person, library staff will share information with the law enforcement agency requesting specific personal information, in the interest of preventing harm to the individual or others.

### Duty to Report

- The *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, s.125 recognizes that all adults have a responsibility for the welfare of children and youth. It clearly states that members of the public, including professionals who work with children and youth, have a *legislated* obligation to report promptly to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) if they suspect that a person under the age of sixteen (16) years is, or may be, in need of protection. The *CYFSA* defines the phrase "child in need of protection" as including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, and at risk of harm.
- Library staff who are concerned that a sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) year old is, or may be, in need of protection *may* make a report to the Children's Aid Society (CAS), and the CAS is required to assess the reported information.

When library staff members have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or youth is, or may be, in need of protection, they will advise the Library CEO and together they will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the local CAS, as required in *CYFSA s.136(1)*.

### **Goals for Library Services for Teens**

The goals of library services for teens/young adults is to assist with the transition from children's services to adult services, and to provide this access in an environment that meets the needs of young people for intellectual, emotional and social development. Specifically, these needs are based on the unique seven developmental needs of adolescents, and the five core values of quality service:

#### Seven Developmental Needs\*

- Physical activity;
- Competence and achievement;
- Self-definition;
- Creative expression;
- Positive social interactions with peers and adults;
- Structure and clear limits;

- Meaningful participation.

\*Excerpted from: Dorman, G. (1981). *The Middle Grades Assessment Program: User's Manual*. Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence.

#### Five Core Values of Service\*

- Respecting and responding to unique young adult needs;
- Providing equitable access;
- Empowering youth through participation;
- Engaging youth in active collaboration;
- Supporting healthy youth development.

\*Core Values excerpted from Jones, P. (2002). *New directions for library service to young adults*. Chicago: American Library Association.

### **The Rights of Teens in the Public Library**

West Perth Public Library's young adult collection, policies and services support intellectual freedom as outlined by the Canadian Library Association, the Ontario Library Association and Ontario Human Rights code:

- West Perth Public Library establishes clear policy statements concerning the right to free access by teens/young adults to library and information resources, and respects their right to select materials appropriate to their needs without censorship.
- The Library provides free access to library materials, services, and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their unique needs. The Library integrates youth services into its operational plans and governance policies, as it does with other user groups.
- Funding for collections and services is related to population, use and local community needs. West Perth Public Library incorporates funding for youth services and materials into its operating budget to ensure equitable distribution of resources to support programs and services for young adults.
- The Library provides a wide spectrum of current materials of interest to young adults to encourage lifelong learning, literacy, reading motivation, and reader development. It develops collections that encourage leisure reading, support homework and school success, and responds to gender and cultural diversity. The Library provides unfettered access to technology including social networking, licensed databases, and other online library resources for teens/young adults.

- West Perth Public Library provides identifiable spaces for youth that are separate from children’s spaces where possible, that allow them to use these spaces for leisure or study, either independently or in groups.
- The Library promotes friendly, positive, non-biased interactions with teens/young adults, and ensures that youth services embrace cultural and gender diversity and economic differences. Library staff respect the need for privacy and non-judgmental service, and assist teens/young adults in acquiring the skills to access all library resources effectively, and to become information-literate.
- West Perth Public Library fosters youth development by providing programs that contribute to literacy, lifelong learning, and volunteer opportunities that develop a sense of responsibility and community involvement. Library staff are knowledgeable about youth development and age-appropriate resources, inclusive of those with special needs. The Library also works in partnership with other community agencies and organizations to support all aspects of healthy, successful youth development.

**Related Documents:**

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Children and the Library*.

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Code of Conduct*.

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Collections*.

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Programming and Community Partnerships*.

Ontario Library Association. [Children’s Rights in the Public Library](#) statement, 1998.

Ontario Library Association. [Teens Rights in the Public Library](#) statement, 2010.

Government of Ontario. *Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990*.

Government of Ontario. *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990*.

Government of Ontario. *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, S.O. 2017*.

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