

# West Perth Public Library

---

## Teens in the Library

### Purpose

West Perth Public Library recognizes that the needs of young people are important in their own right: that their intellectual growth, their cultural appreciation and recreational activities should be fostered through quality library service, delivered with consideration and respect. This policy sets out the services to be offered for teens and young adults in the Library, and also sets out responsibility relating to safety, truancy and missing children.

West Perth Public Library endeavours to provide this service 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.

### Services

#### Collections

1. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive teen/young adult collection based on the *Collections Policy*.
2. The collection for teen/young adult will meet high standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of children and teens as well as trends in society.
3. The staff will develop the collections to address the issues of:
  - a. Canadian authors and content;
  - b. award-winning titles;
  - c. non-fiction material that complements the local school curriculum;
  - d. age-appropriate formats.

#### Reference and Readers Advisory

1. The qualified staff will utilize the full range of collections, technology and methods to answer all users' requests for advice on selecting books and for information, regardless of age and without judgment, with confidentiality and respect.
2. Library staff will point out the variety of resources available in all areas of the Library as appropriate.

## Programs

1. The Library will provide programming for teens/young adults, 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.
2. The Library will provide educational, entertaining and literature-related programs and support for teens/young adults that will highlight various aspects of our collection while encouraging reading for pleasure or leisure activities.
3. The staff will actively involve teens/young adults in planning and implementing programs for this age group.
4. The number of participants for all programs will be restricted based on size of the facility, fire department limits, staff supervision available, etc.; this will be enforced by the Library staff member in charge.

## **Library Space**

1. The Library will provide a space for teens/young adults that is distinct from the adult area.
2. This area will have furniture, shelves and equipment that are designed for teens/young adults and which are fully accessible.
3. The Library will ensure that signage is clear and age-appropriate.
4. This area will be an interactive learning environment where controlled noise levels are accepted.

## **Staffing**

1. The Board will support a program of ongoing staff training and professional development in services for teens/young adults.
2. The CEO will ensure that all staff members assigned to teen/young adult' services receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable library service.
3. The Library staff will advocate for teen/young adult services in the community by:
  - a. collaborating with agencies to promote love of reading, life long learning and teens' health and well-being;
  - b. seeking support for teen/young adult services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc.;
  - c. networking with other agencies who provide service to teen/young adult services in the community, region and province;

- d. communicating with principals, teacher librarians and teachers in the community;
- e. promoting the services and collections to groups who could benefit from them (schools, etc.).

### **Safety of Children in the Library**

West Perth Public Library staff recognizes that people of all ages have a right to a welcoming, respectful, supportive and safe environment when they visit the Library. As a public facility, the Library does not monitor the activities of its patrons unless there is a problem with conduct as outlined in the *Code of Conduct Policy*, or a child is left alone as outlined in the *Children in the Library Policy*. There are two situations which require specific guidance:

1. *Truancy* – If a school-age child is noticed to be spending considerable time in the Library during the school day, staff may check with the individual and ask that a parent confirm with the Library that he/she is aware of the children’s whereabouts. This applies to those up to the age of 16.
2. *Missing Persons* - Library staff will not give information to any person over the telephone as to whether a person is currently in the Library or has been in the Library recently. Library staff may offer to take a message and ask the child to call the person back. In the case of a missing person, Library staff will share information with the law enforcement agency requesting specific personal information.
3. *Duty to Report*
  - a) The *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* (Section 125) recognizes that each of us has a responsibility for the welfare of children. It clearly states that members of the public, including professionals who work with children, have a *legislated* obligation to report promptly to the Children’s Aid Society (CAS) if they suspect that a child or youth under the age of 16 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 risk of harm.
  - b) Library staff who are concerned that a 16-or 17-year-old is, or may be, in need of protection *may* make a report to Children’s Aid Society (CAS) and the CAS is required to assess the reported information;
  - c) 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 goal of library services for teens is to assist with the transition from children's services to adult services, and to provide access to both resources and 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 to teens:

### Seven Developmental Needs of Teens

- Physical activity
- Competence and achievement
- Self-definition
- Creative expression
- Positive social Interaction 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 to teens

- Respecting and responding to unique YA needs
- Providing equal access
- Empowering Youth through participation
- Engaging Teens 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**

1. Intellectual freedom.
  - a. The Library establishes clear policy statements concerning the right to free access by young adults to library resources and information sources; and respect for the rights of young adults to select materials appropriate to their needs without censorship. The Library's teen collection, policies and services should be consistent with the concepts of intellectual freedom

defined by the CLA, OLA and Ontario Human Rights code.

2. Equal access to the full range of materials, services, and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their unique needs.
  - a. The Library integrates library service to teens into the overall plan, budget and service program for the Library. Library service to teens is integrated with those offered to other user groups.
3. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.
  - a. The Library incorporates funding for materials and services for teens in the Library operating budget and ensures there is equitable distribution of resources to support programs and services for young adults.
4. Collections that specifically meet the needs of teens.
  - a. The Library provides a wide spectrum of current materials of interest to young adults to encourage lifelong learning, literacy, reading motivation, and reader development. The Library endeavors to develop 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.
5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.
  - a. The Library provides identifiable spaces for teens that are separate from children's spaces where possible, reflects their lifestyle and allows for teens to use this Library space for leisure or study, either independently or in groups.
6. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service at every service point.
  - a. The Library promotes friendly, positive, non-biased customer interactions with teens, providing staff development and training, and ensures that services for teens embrace cultural and gender diversity and economic differences. Library staff will endeavor to respect the teen's need for privacy and nonjudgmental service and assist young adults in acquiring the skills to effectively access all library resources and become information literate.
7. Library Programs and Services appropriate for Teens.
  - a. The Library fosters youth development by providing programs for teens that contribute to literacy, life- long learning and healthy youth

development. The library endeavors to provide volunteer opportunities for helping others through community service hours including participating on Library Advisory Boards, and other projects that help develop a sense of responsibility and community involvement. The Library's teen services initiatives are effectively managed according to best practices in the field of Youth Services.

8. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in teen services.
  - a. Library staff is knowledgeable about adolescent development and age-appropriate resources for young adults inclusive of those with special needs.
  
9. 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.
  - a. The Library works in partnership with other community agencies and organizations to support all aspects of healthy, successful youth development.
  
10. Library policies are written to include the needs of the youth

(Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting June 2010.)

**Related Documents:**

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

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

---

**Issued:** February 2021

**Revised:**