

Policy No.: P16

Policy Title: Unattended Child

Date Originated:

Date Last Reviewed/Revised: January 2022

Point of Contact: Director, Engagement & Client Experience

POLICY STATEMENT

Children of all ages are welcome in the Library. While the City of Pickering Public Library tries to provide a safe environment for all, caregivers are responsible for the supervision of children in their care while the children are on Library premises.

DEFINITIONS

Caregiver

- Parents, guardians, caregivers, older siblings, relatives who are directly responsible for the care and wellbeing of the child, while in the Pickering Public Library.

Child(ren)

- All persons who are under the age of twelve (12) years of age.

Competency

- The ability of the child to accept social cues, be responsible for their own functions and behaviour and accept the direction of staff.

Unattended

- A child left without visible supervision by a caregiver within the Pickering Public Library.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. Children Under 7 Years of Age

- Children who are seven (7) years of age or under must be accompanied by a caregiver while on Library premises.
- A caregiver for a child 7 years or younger must be 12 years of age or older.
- Children who are seven (7) years of age or under attending Library programs or events must have a caregiver present in the Library.
- Where Library programs or events are held outside of the Library building, the caregiver must remain within visual range of children.

2. Children 8 to 11 Years of Age

- Children who are eight (8) to eleven (11) years of age will be assessed by Library staff for their competency related to being unsupervised in the Library.
- Some signs that indicate that a child might not be competent to be on their own are: crying or frightened; acting in a manner that may be harmful; unable to unwilling to change their behaviour; cannot follow direction from staff or seeking ongoing attention from Library staff due to loneliness.
- Staff will advise caregivers if their child appears to need assistance while on the premises.

3. Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of the caregiver to monitor both the whereabouts and behaviour of children in their care on Library premises.
- Staff are expected to respond when children are left unattended at the Pickering Public Library and will take the appropriate action, including contacting the child's family, Durham Regional Police or Durham Children's Aid Society.
- Under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, April 30, 2018, section #125, Library Staff have a Duty to Report if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is in need of protection.

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- The Rights of Children & Teens in the Library Policy

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.
Please speak to Library staff for assistance.