

REPORT

Oakville Public Library Board

Meeting Date: May 15, 2025

FROM: Oakville Public Library

DATE: May 6, 2025

SUBJECT: Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Youth Policy – May 15, 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Youth Policy be received for feedback.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- The Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Youth Policy (Appendix A) has been renamed and updated from the previous version approved in July 2019 (Appendix B – PS-007 Safety and Well-being of Children Policy)
- The rights of children and teens in public libraries are now formally documented in the policy.
- Policy revisions regarding unattended children now directly mirrors language from the Child, Youth and Family Services Act and the recommendations of the Children's Aid Society (CAS).
- General revisions have been made to ensure alignment with related OPL policies, services, and operations.

BACKGROUND:

All policies are regularly reviewed to ensure that they reflect the values, intentions, and practices of the Oakville Public Library. It is the current practice to remove procedural elements into dedicated internal procedures and to ensure that all policies provide clear framework for organizational decision-making.

The Safety and Well-being of Children Policy (Appendix B) was previously approved by the OPL Board on April 22, 2021.

COMMENT/OPTIONS:

The Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Youth Policy has been renamed to align with the scope of the policy, which applies to children and youth under the age of 18 years old.

OPL endorses the Ontario Library Association's position statements on [Children's Rights in the Library \(1998\)](#) and [Teens' Rights in the Library \(2010\)](#). The policy previously linked out to these documents, but now these rights are formally listed within the policy document.

The policy previously stated that "library recognizes the terms as stipulated by the Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA) with respect to the supervision of children" and that "children younger than 10 years of age must be directly supervised by a parent or responsible caregiver and may not be left alone in the library."

However, the [Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, S.O. 2017, C. 14, Sched. 1](#) specifies only that "No person having charge of a child younger than 16 shall leave the child without making provision for the child's supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances." Section 136(3).

The revised policy does outline that "in accordance with Children's Aid Society (CAS) recommendations, children under the age of 10 should not be left alone, and should be accompanied by an adult or caregiver while accessing library programs, collections, services, and spaces."

This revision ensures that the responsibility for the supervision and care of children, that is reasonable within the circumstances, remains solely with the parent/guardian or caregiver. Library staff are still directed to address concerns related to conduct, address issues arising with unattended children, and to uphold their 'duty to report' any suspicion that a child or youth may be in need of protection.

Other general revisions have been made to ensure alignment with related OPL policies, services, and operations.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – PS-007 Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Youth Policy (2025)

Appendix B – PS-007 Safety and Well-being of Children Policy (2021)

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