

Muskoka Lakes Township Public Library
LIBRARY BOARD POLICY

Policy Type: Operational	Policy Number: OP-21
Policy Title: Youth Services	Policy Approval Date: 06/13/23
Chairperson: V. Duke	Policy Review Date: 06/27

Intent:

The Muskoka Lakes Public Library (herein after referred to as the Library) recognizes that children and teens are important in their own right and that their needs for intellectual growth, 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 children and teens to meet their needs, as well as parents/guardians/caregivers and adults who work with children or are interested in children's literature.

Regulations:

The Library endeavours to provide service to children and teens based on the principles stated in the Ontario Library Association's Children's Rights in the Public Library, 1988 and Teen Rights in the Public Library, 2010 which state that children and teens have the right to intellectual freedom and are entitled to open access to all information and services throughout the Library within the context of Provincial and Federal law. Services to children and teens are provided in accordance with the Library's policy on Intellectual Freedom (GF-04)

Procedures:**Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

- Child: 0 to 13 years of age
- Teen: 14 to 19 years of age

Membership:

Any child or teen who lives or studies in the Township of Muskoka Lakes is eligible for a Library card. Parents or guardians may apply on behalf of their child, up to and including the age of 14. In accordance with the Library's User Membership Policy (OP-05), teens, fourteen years of age and older, can provide their own identification and apply for a Library card without parental consent, Any child or teen with or without a library card may use the services and collections within the Library facility.

Collections:

The Library provides a wide range of materials in all formats and reading levels to fulfill the informational, cultural, learning and leisure needs of children and teens:

1. The CEO will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive children's and teens' collection based on the Collection Development Policy (OP-24). Appropriate priority will be given to ensure adequate funds are available to build a collection that is current, attractive and broad in scope.
2. The children's and teens' collections will meet best practice standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs, trends in society and personal interests of children and teens.
3. Collection development of material for children and teens will focus on, but not be limited to:
 - a. Canadian authors and bilingual and multicultural content
 - b. award-winning titles
 - c. non-fiction material that complements the local school curriculum
 - d. age-appropriate formats
 - e. diversity and inclusion

Information Services and Readers Advisory:

Library staff connect children and teens with the materials they require, by:

1. Utilizing the full range of collections, technology and methods, to answer requests for advice on selecting books and information from all users, regardless of age, without judgement and with respect and confidentiality.
2. Engaging in meaningful and age-appropriate conversations to better understand the wants and needs of each child and teen. These conversations may also assist children and teens in the development of information and research skills.
3. Pointing out the variety of resources available in all areas of the Library, as appropriate.

Library staff will not restrict access to or censor adult materials. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians/caregivers to determine suitability for their children and teens.

Programs:

The Library provides programming for children, teens, parents/guardians and caregivers to stimulate creative potential and to encourage and facilitate the habit of reading, independent learning and lifelong use of the Library.

1. The Library will provide educational, entertaining and literacy related programs and support for children and teens, such as:
 - a. Programs for parents, guardians, adults, and caregivers that will educate them on the importance of early literacy, the role of the Library in their children's lives, and the support the Library can offer them,
 - b. Programs for children's groups, school classes, summer, school breaks and professional development days, etc., that, depending on age, will emphasize early literacy, Library orientation, technological literacy and current trends that encourage reading for leisure, or highlight various aspects of the collection.

2. The staff will actively involve teens in planning and implementing programs for this age group.
3. The number of participants for all programs will be restricted based on size of the facility, fire department limits, staff capacity and resources, etc.
4. Some programs may limit the age of children or teens and the number of children per accompanying adult to facilitate the maximum benefit to the child/teen/parent/guardian. The needs of parents, guardians or caregivers of more than one child will be considered.

Library Space:

The Library will provide well-planned areas for children and teens that are distinct from the adult areas and include the following features:

1. visually stimulating so that children and teens are able to readily distinguish their space from the rest of the library
2. furniture, shelves and equipment that are designed for and accessible to all children and teens
3. signage that is clear and age appropriate
4. an interactive learning environment where controlled noise levels are tolerated and where children and teens are invited to explore the library materials and services in their own way
5. clearly visible to staff

Staffing:

The Library provides trained staff who have a rapport with and understanding of children and teens:

1. The Board will support a program of ongoing staff training and professional development in children's and teens' services, in the context of individual staff members' training needs.
2. The CEO will ensure, to the extent possible, that all staff members assigned to children's and teens' services receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable Library service to these age groups.
3. While Library staff will assist young people with finding materials, using the Internet or attending programs, they do not act "in loco parentis". Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for their children/teen's use of the Library.

Conduct and Behaviour:

The Youth Services Policy on noise levels and conduct of behaviour is an adjunct policy to the Library's User Code of Conduct Policy (OP-01) and Safety and Supervision of Children Policy (OP-06).

1. Parents, guardians or caregivers are responsible for the behaviour of their children while in the Library.
2. Library staff will ask a child/teen (or adult) to stop a behaviour if it:
 - a. affects the enjoyment of the Library for others;
 - b. disrupts a program;
 - c. presents a dangerous situation for that user, any other user or staff; or
 - d. adversely affects the Library's equipment and/or facility.
3. When the staff member asks a user to stop a behaviour, he/she will explain why the behaviour is not acceptable.
4. If a staff member's attempts to correct the situation are unsuccessful, he/she will consult with the CEO or in his/her absence, the senior staff member in attendance.

Advocacy for Teens and Children:

The Library will advocate for children's and teens' library services in the community by:

1. Collaborating with agencies to promote early literacy, love of reading, lifelong learning and children's and teens' health and well-being.
2. Networking with other agencies, including school personnel, that provide Library service to children and teens in the community, district and province.
3. Promoting the children/teen's services and collections to groups who could benefit from them (schools, day cares etc.).
4. Welcoming class visits and orientation for school children and home schooled children
5. Seeking support for children's and teens' Library services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc.

Related Documents:

MLPL GF-04 Intellectual Freedom
MLPL OP-01 User Code of Conduct
MLPL OP-04 Circulation
MLPL OP- 05 User Membership
MLPL OP-06 Safety and Supervision of Children
MLPL OP-20 Information Services Policy
MLPL OP-22 Programming Policy
MLPL OP-24 Collection Development
MLPL OPINT-01 Internet Usage and Technolog

