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| Policy Title: | Children in the CPLMA |
| Policy Type: | Public Service |
| Policy #: | PS 02 |
| Policy Authority: | CEO |
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PURPOSE

To provide guidelines to Clarington Public Library, Museums and Archives (CPLMA) staff on ensuring the safety of children in the CPLMA and protecting them from harm.

POLICY

The CPLMA recognizes the importance of child safety and aims to create a safe and welcoming environment for all children using the CPLMA. The responsibility for the safety of children in or about CPLMA premises rests with the parent/caregiver and not with CPLMA staff.

1. Child Behavior

The CPLMA expects all children to behave in a respectful and appropriate manner while on CPLMA premises. CPLMA staff will intervene when a child's behavior disrupts CPLMA operations or services, or when it poses a risk to the safety of the child or others.

2. Lost Child

If a child is separated from their parent/caregiver in the CPLMA, staff members will make every effort to locate the parent/caregiver within the CPLMA or by telephone. If the parent/caregiver cannot be located, the police will be contacted.

3. Telephone Inquiries to Locate Child

The CPLMA should assist callers on locating a child in a manner that will help protect the safety of the child, that will not interfere with public service delivery, and in a way that will not involve staff as intermediaries. Telephone numbers should not be passed from the caller, through CPLMA staff, to a child. A child should not be called to the telephone at the request of the caller.

4. Unattended Children

The CPLMA encourages and promotes children's use of the CPLMA, but children under the age of 10 should not be left unattended at any time and a competent caregiver should be on the same premise as the child. The CPLMA defines a competent caregiver as an individual aged 12 or older to whom the parent/guardian has given responsibility for the care of the child.

When an unaccompanied child under the age of 10 is found in the CPLMA, the CPLMA staff member should attempt to locate the child's parent/caregiver in the CPLMA or by telephone if possible. If all reasonable attempts to contact the parent/caregiver fail, the Durham Regional Police Service should be contacted.

The Board is committed to providing high-quality CPLMA services to children. We recognize the importance of children's intellectual growth, cultural appreciation, and recreational activities, and will ensure that our CPLMA services reflect this commitment.

In order to achieve this goal, the CPLMA will use the principles outlined in the 'Statement on Children's Rights in the Library' as a guide for service planning. The Board endorses the policy statement of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) concerning "Children's Rights in the Public Library" dated 1998.

As such, we affirm that children in public libraries have the following rights:

1. Intellectual freedom.
2. Equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users.
3. A full range of materials, services and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their needs.
4. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.
5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.
6. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in children's services.
7. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service from birth through the transition to adult user.
8. 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 children's services.
9. Library policies written to include the needs of the child.

The Board is committed to upholding and promoting the rights of children in public libraries and will work to ensure that our services reflect these principles.

CONCLUSION

The CPLMA is committed to the safety and well-being of all children using the CPLMA. The CPLMA expects all staff members to be familiar with and adhere to these policies in order to ensure the safety of children and protect them from harm.