Policy Type: Operational **Policy Number: OP-12**

Policy Title: Children's and Teens' Services

Initial Approval Date: 25 September 2013
Last Review/Revision Date: 2021
Review Date: 2025

The Madawaska Valley Public Library (the Library) recognizes that the needs of young people are important in their own right: that their intellectual growth, cultural appreciation and recreational activities should be fostered through quality library service, delivered with consideration and respect.

The services described herein are intended to meet the needs of children and teens, as well as parents, guardians and adults who work with young people or are interested in children's and teens's literature, and as dictated by the needs of the community. This policy sets out the responsibilities for the safety of children and teens in the Library.

Section 1: Services

1. Collections

a) The Chief Executive Officer (the CEO) or designate will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive children's and teens' collection based on the Collection Development Policy OP-05.

b) The children's and teens' collections 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, and local community requirements.

c) Profiles of the collections will be developed, when necessary, to define the scope and to address the issues of:

i. local and Canadian authors and content
ii. award-winning titles
iii. non-fiction material that complement the local school curriculum
iv. age appropriate formats.

2. Reference and Readers Advisory

a) The CEO or designate 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.

b) Staff should conduct interviews to better understand what each child and teen wants and needs.

c) Staff will point out the variety of resources available in all areas of the Library as appropriate.

3. Programs

a) The Library will provide programming for children, teens, and parents, 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.

b) The Library will provide educational, entertaining and literature-related programs and support for children and teens such as:

   i. Programs for parents/guardians, adults, 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

   ii. Programs for classes, children's groups, daycare, etc. depending on age, will emphasize early literacy and library orientation, and that encourage reading for leisure, or highlight various aspects of the collection

   iii. Programs for summer, school breaks and / or professional development days will be primarily book based and will highlight various aspects of our collection while encouraging reading for pleasure or leisure activities.

c) Staff will actively involve teens in planning and implementing programs for this age group.

d) 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 children's programmer/staff/volunteer in charge.

e) Some programs may limit the age of children or teens and the number of children per accompanying adult/guardian/caregiver. This limit may be enforced by the staff as the program is designed for maximum benefit to the child/parent/guardian through one-on-one interaction. Leniency is given to parents of more than one child.

Section 2: Library Space

1. The Library will provide well-planned areas for children and teens that are distinct from the adult area.
2. These areas should be visually stimulating so that children and teens are able to readily distinguish their own space from the rest of the Library.
3. These areas will have furniture, shelves and equipment that are designed for and accessible to all children.
4. The Library will ensure that signage is clear and age appropriate.
5. The children's and teens' areas are interactive learning environments where controlled noise levels are tolerated and where young users are invited to explore the library materials and services in their own way.

Section 3: Staffing

1. The Township of Madawaska Valley Public Library Board (the Board) will support a program of ongoing staff/volunteer training and professional development in children's and teens' services.
2. The CEO will ensure that all staff/volunteers assigned to children's and teens' services receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable library services.
3. While staff/volunteers will assist young people with finding material, using the Internet or attending programs, they do not act in "loco parents" / babysitters. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children's use of the Library.

Section 4: Advocacy for Children and Teens

1. The Library will advocate for children's and teens' services in the community by:
   a) Collaborating with agencies to promote early literacy, love of reading, life-long learning and children's and teens' health and well-being
   b) Seeking support for children's and teens' services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc.
   c) Networking with other agencies who provide service to children and teens in the community, region and province
   d) Communicating with principals and teachers in the community
   e) Promoting the children's and teens' services and collections to groups who could benefit from them (schools, daycares, etc.)
   f) Welcoming class visits and orientation for schools and home-schooled children and teens.

Related Documents:

Policy Number **OP-05**	**Collection Development Policy**
Policy Number **OP-09**	**Use of Internet and Electronic Media Policy**
Policy Number **OP-13**	**Safety of Children in the Library**