

The Meaford Public Library recognizes that the needs of young people is 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. This policy sets out the services to be offered for teens and young adults.

The Meaford Public Library endeavours to provide this service based on the principles stated in the Ontario Library Association's (OLA) Teens' Rights in the Public Library, as adopted at the OLA Annual General Meeting June 2010 (See Appendix A).

Section 1: Scope

1. The services described in this policy are intended to meet the needs of teens/young adults as well as parents, guardians, and adults who work with teens or are interested in teen literature and programs. Teens/young adults are those ages 12 years and older.

Section 2: Services

1. Collections:

- a) The Library Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designate will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive teen collection based on Policy 26 - Collection Development.
- b) The teen collection will meet high standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of teens, as well as trends in society.
- c) Access to adult materials will not be restricted by library staff but will be the responsibility of caregivers to determine suitability for their teen/young adult.

2. Reference and Readers' Advisory:

- a) Qualified staff 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) Library staff will point out the variety of resources available in all areas of the library as appropriate.
- c) Library staff should engage in meaningful and age-appropriate conversation to better understand what each teen/young adult wants and needs.

3. Programs:

- a) The library will provide programming for teens, both in and out of the library, to stimulate creative potential, creative self-expression, social interaction, physical activity and values of acceptance. In addition, to encourage and facilitate the love of and habit of reading, independent learning, and lifelong use of the library.
- b) The library will provide educational, entertaining, and literature related programs and support for teens/young adults, such as programs for summer, school breaks and professional development days.
- c) The staff will actively encourage the involvement of 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.
- e) The library will look to collaborate and partner for teen services in the community by:
 - i. Collaborating with agencies to promote love of reading, life-long learning and teens' health and well-being
 - ii. Seeking support for teen/young adult services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc.
 - iii. Networking with other agencies who provide service to teen/young adult services in the community, region, and province
 - iv. Communicating with principals, teacher librarians and teachers in the community
 - v. Promoting the services and collections to groups who could benefit from them (schools, etc.)

Section 3: Library Space

- 1. The library will provide a well-planned area for teens that is fully accessible and distinct from the adult area.
- 2. This area will have furniture, shelves and equipment that are designed for teens/young adults.

3. The library will ensure that signage is clear and age appropriate.
4. The area for teens is an interactive learning environment where controlled noise levels are tolerated and where young people are invited to explore the library materials and services in their own way.

Section 4: Staffing

1. The Board will support a program of ongoing staff training and professional development in services for teens.
2. The CEO will ensure that all staff members assigned to teen services receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable library service.

Section 5: Safety of Teens/Young Adults in the Library

The Meaford Public Library recognizes that people of all ages have a right to a welcoming, respectful, supportive, and safe environment when they visit the library. As a public facility, the library does not monitor the activities of its patrons unless there is a problem with conduct as outlined in Policy 5 – Library Rules of Conduct or Policy 37 - Unattended Children. There are specific situations which require specific guidance:

1. **Truancy** – If a young person (up to the age of 16) is noticed to be spending considerable time in the library during the school day, staff may check with the individual and ask that a caregiver confirm with the library that they are aware of the young person's whereabouts.
2. **Missing Persons** - Library staff will not give information to any person over the telephone as to whether a person is currently in the library or has been in the library recently. Library staff may offer to take a message and ask the teen/young adult to call the person back. In the case of a missing person, library staff will share information with the law enforcement agency requesting specific personal information.
3. **Duty to Report**
 - a) The *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* (Section 125) recognizes that each of us has a responsibility for the welfare of children. It clearly states that members of the public, including professionals who work with children, have a **legislated** obligation to report promptly to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) if they suspect that a child or youth under the age of 16 is, or may be, in need of protection. The CYFSA defines the phrase "child in need of protection" as including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, and risk of harm.
 - b) Library staff who are concerned that a 16-or 17-year-old is, or may be, in need of protection **may** make a report to Children's Aid Society (CAS) and the CAS is required to assess the reported information

- c) When library staff members have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or youth is, or may be, in need of protection, they will advise the Library CEO and together they will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the local CAS, as required in CYFSA s.136 (1).

Related Documents:

Meaford Public Library, ***Policy 2 Internet Services Policy***

Meaford Public Library, ***Policy 3 Circulation Policy***

Meaford Public Library, ***Policy 5 Library Rules of Conduct***

Meaford Public Library, ***Policy 26 Collection Development Policy***

Meaford Public Library, ***Policy 37 Unattended Children Policy***

Approved: December 2018

Revised: May 2024

K. Grafton

Meaford Public Library Board Chair

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Appendix A – Ontario Library Association - Teens’ Rights in the Public Library

Goals for Library Services for Teens:

Young people are valuable members of our library community who deserve the same respect, dignity and human rights as all library members. This document provides a framework for developing library services to teens that meet the educational, informational, and cultural and leisure needs of young people in ways that are developmentally appropriate. Each public library has a different community to serve and therefore different priorities and needs. Although specific services for teens have not been well established in all libraries, these goals are created in the belief that young adulthood is a unique life stage and that young adults are entitled to the same quality of library services offered to other age groups in the population. *(Adapted from the IFLA Guidelines for Library Services for Young Adults, 2006 and the YALSA Guidelines for Library Services to Teens, Ages 12-18, 2006.)*

The goal of library services for teens is to assist with the transition from children’s services to adult services and to provide access to both resources and an environment that meets the needs of young people for intellectual, emotional, and social development. Specifically, these needs are based on the unique seven developmental needs of adolescents and the five core values of quality service to teens:

Seven Developmental Needs of Teens:

- Physical activity
- Competence and achievement
- Self-definition
- Creative expression
- Positive social Interaction with Peers and Adults
- Structure and Clear Limits
- Meaningful Participation

(Excerpted from: Dorman, G. (1981). The Middle Grades Assessment Program: User’s Manual. Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence)

Five Core Values of service to teens:

- Respecting and responding to unique YA needs
- Providing equal access
- Empowering Youth through participation
- Engaging Teens in active collaboration
- Supporting healthy youth development

(Core Values excerpted from Jones, P. (2002). New directions for library service to young adults. Chicago: American Library Association)

Teens in Ontario Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom:

The library establishes clear policy statements concerning the right to free access by young adults to library resources and information sources; and respect for the rights of young adults to select materials appropriate to their needs without censorship, The library's teen collection, policies and services should be consistent with the concepts of intellectual freedom defined by the CLA, OLA and Ontario Human Rights code.

2. Equal access to the full range of materials, services, and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their unique needs:

The Library integrates library service to teens into the overall plan, budget, and service programs for the library. Library service to teens is integrated with those offered to other user groups.

3. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs:

The Library incorporates funding for materials and services for teens in the library operating budget and ensures there is equitable distribution of resources to support programs and services for young adults.

4. Collections that specifically meet the needs of teens:

The Library provides a wide spectrum of current materials of interest to young adults to encourage lifelong learning, literacy, reading motivation, and reader development. The library endeavors to develop collections that encourage leisure reading, support homework and school success and responds to gender and cultural diversity. The library provides unfettered access to technology including social networking, licensed databases, and other online library resources for teens.

5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages:

The Library provides identifiable spaces for teens that are separate from children's spaces where possible, reflects their lifestyle, and allows for teens to use this library space for leisure or study, either independently or in groups.

6. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service at every service point:

The Library promotes friendly, positive, non-biased customer interactions with teens, providing staff development and training and ensures that services for teens embrace cultural and gender diversity and economic differences. Library staff will endeavor to respect teens' need for privacy and nonjudgmental service and assist young adults in acquiring the skills to effectively access all library resources and become information literate.

7. Library Programs and Services appropriate for Teens:

The Library fosters youth development by providing programs for teens that contribute to literacy, lifelong learning and healthy youth development. The library endeavors to provide volunteer opportunities for helping others through community service hours including participating on Library Advisory Boards, and other projects that help develop a sense of responsibility and community involvement. The library's teen service initiatives are effectively managed according to best practices in the field of Youth Services.

8. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in teen services:

Library staff is knowledgeable about adolescent development and age-appropriate resources for young adults inclusive to all.

9. 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 teen services:

The Library works in partnership with other community agencies and organizations to support all aspects of healthy, successful youth development.

10. Library policies are written to include the needs of the youth.

Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting June 2010.