

## Hanover Public Library POLICIES

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Policy Title: **Unattended Children Policy**

Policy type: Operational

Revision date: August 2012

Signature of Chair:

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of children and define responsibility for their welfare while they are in the library.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Library welcomes children of all ages. The staff want the Library to be a welcoming, educational and safe place for your child.

The Library staff is here to serve you and your family, but have many duties to perform in order to serve all of our patrons in the best way possible. As a result, staff cannot supervise children in the Library or assume responsibility for a child's care when they use the Library, and will not act *in loco parentis*.

Staff do not monitor or restrict use of the library by patrons regardless of their age. There are resources and Internet access provided in the library that could be viewed as inappropriate for children, and it is the responsibility of parents to supervise the child's use of all library resources.

The behaviour and welfare of children in the Library is the responsibility of the parents or guardian of the child.

### **Definitions:**

#### **The Ontario Child and Family Services Act states:**

*"no person having charge of a child less than 16 years of age shall leave the child without making provision for his/her supervision and care, that is reasonable in the circumstances"*  
(S.79 (1)(3)).

For the purposes of this policy, **Child/Children** includes anyone below the age of 10.

**Parent/Guardian** includes parents guardians, caregivers, older siblings, relatives who are directly responsible for the care and wellbeing of the child.

**Unattended** means a child left without visible supervision by a parent/guardian within the Hanover Public Library.

### **Policy Practices**

1. Responsibility for the welfare and behaviour of children using the Library ultimately rests with the parent/guardian or an assigned caregiver. It is strongly recommended that all children under 10 years of age be accompanied by and within sight of someone who can take responsibility should an emergency occur. Children found unaccompanied may result in the Hanover Police Service being contacted.

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2. Library staff cannot supervise children nor act in loco parentis.
3. Children younger than 10 years must have a parent or responsible caregiver in the immediate vicinity unless they are participating in a Library program. If a child is attending a program at the Library, the library staff will ensure the child's safety from the start to the end of the program. However, the library staff cannot be responsible for the child before and after attendance at the program.  
Parent or caregivers for those under 10 years of age who do not attend the program with the child must remain in the building, in case of emergencies.  
In all cases parents are still responsible for the actions of their children.
4. Children 10 years and older may use the Library unattended for an amount of time appropriate to their age and maturity. These children will be expected to follow the same policies on appropriate library behaviour as adult patrons. Children not abiding by these policies will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behaviour continues, the child shall be asked to leave the Library.
5. If a child under the age of 10 is found to be unaccompanied by an adult or caregiver, the staff will ask the child for their name and phone number to attempt to notify the child's parents. If the staff is unable to reach the parents successfully after a half hour the local police will be contacted. The Library staff cannot take responsibility for the care of a child of any age.
6. If a child in distress is found without a parent or caregiver, two staff members will attempt to comfort the child and contact the parents. If the responsible adults cannot be reached within a half hour or by closing time, whichever is sooner, staff will contact the local police.

Reference: Ontario Child and Family Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chap. C11, sect.79