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The Mississippi Mills Public Library provides services for children under 14 years, to assist in developing the full potential of each child. The Mississippi Mills Public Library Board endorses the *Children's Rights in the Public Library* adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting, 1998. (Appendix A)

LIBRARY SPACE

1. The Library provides a pleasant and inviting atmosphere for children by:
 - a) assigning a reading area specifically designated for children
 - b) providing an area designed for children's programming separate from daily library service areas
 - c) providing furniture, shelves and equipment designed for and accessible to all children
 - d) ensuring that signage is clear and legible for children

STAFFING

1. The Library provides trained staff with rapport with children by:
 - a) employing a specialist in children's library services and programs
 - b) ensuring that staff receive training in children's services in order to provide knowledgeable library service

RESOURCES

1. The Library provides a wide range of materials in various formats to fulfill the informational, cultural, learning and leisure needs of children by:
 - a) ensuring a materials selection policy that reflects the characteristics inherent to children's collections
 - b) evaluating the children's collection on an ongoing basis
 - c) ensuring that adequate funds be made available to support the development of a children's collection that is up-to-date, in good condition and generally attractive
 - d) ensuring that the children's collection is organized for easy access and with children's capabilities in mind

- e) providing materials representing Canadiana, multicultural and bilingual literature, traditional and popular materials, and literature designed to serve special groups, keeping in mind the needs of the children in the community

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

1. The Library provides children with open access to information and facilities throughout the Library by:
 - a) providing library service for children with the same respect and consideration as is assured to all patrons
 - b) ensuring that library procedures support the Children in the Library Policy
 - c) ensuring the public has access to policy statements

PROGRAMS

1. The Library provides programs for children, both in and out of the Library, and in some cases on a cost-recovery basis, to stimulate the child's imagination and desire to learn, and to promote the use of the collection.
2. Opportunities to give feedback on children's programming will be provided.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

1. The Library communicates and cooperates with other community groups and organizations devoted to serving children by:
 - a) actively encouraging the continued cooperation of schools and community groups in the use of the Library
 - b) providing expertise and support for community groups and organizations serving children

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

1. The responsibilities of parents /guardians are to:
 - a) monitor the use of services and collections by their children
 - b) be responsible for borrowed materials and fines incurred by their children
 - c) not leave children who require supervision unattended in or about Library premises
 - d) take responsibility for monitoring their children's Internet use. Although the Library tries to make all Internet terminals visible to staff, staff cannot monitor Internet use at all times.

SAFETY OF CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY

1. Parents or guardians are responsible for the supervision of their children. Children requiring supervision are not to be left unattended in or about the Library premises.

2. Staff intervention on behalf of children:
 - a) Staff is expected to intervene on behalf of children in difficult situations. Particular care must be taken to ensure a supportive environment for the child.
 - b) Staff will not under any circumstances drive a child home.
 - c) Staff will attempt to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of abandoned children or children left unattended in or about the Library premises. Police will be notified if the parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot be reached.
 - d) Staff will inform the Children's Aid Society or police of any suspected child abuse.

DUTY TO REPORT

1. The *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA) recognize 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 an 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.
2. The duty to report applies to any child who is, or appears to be, under the age of 16 years. It also applies to children subject to a child protection order who are 16 and 17 years old.
3. When library staff members have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, they will advise the CEO/Chief Librarian and together they will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the local CAS, as stated in the CFSA s 72 (1).

Appendix A (next page)

Appendix A

Ontario Library Association – Children's Rights in the Public Library

OLA Position on Children's Rights in the Public Library

Children in Public Libraries have the right to:

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.

Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting, November 1998

Posted at http://accessola2.com/data/1/rec_docs/380_ola3.pdf

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Ontario's *Child and Family Services Act*, R.S.O. 1990. Chapter C.11, s.72 (1)
- Mississippi Mills Public Library Policies:
 - Circulation
 - Technology
 - Collection
 - Intellectual Freedom
- Southern Ontario Library Service, Trillium Public Library: Sample Policies