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The Mississippi Mills Public Library recognizes that the needs of young people are important in their own right: that their intellectual growth, their 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 in the Library, and also sets out responsibility relating to safety, truancy and missing children.

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

LIBRARY SPACE

1. The library will designate a well-planned space for Teens/Young Adults materials.
2. The library will ensure that signage designating the Teens/Young Adults' collection is clear.

STAFFING

1. The Board will support a program of ongoing staff training and professional development in services for teens/young adults.
2. The CEO/Chief Librarian will ensure that staff members receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable library service.

RESOURCES

1. The CEO will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive Teens/Young Adults collection based on the Collection Policy.
2. The collection for Teens/Young Adults will meet high standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of teens as well as trends in

society.

3. The staff will develop profiles of the collections to define the scope and to address the issues of:
 - a) Canadian authors and content
 - b) award-winning titles
 - c) non-fiction material pertinent to teens
 - d) age appropriate formats

REFERENCE AND READERS ADVISORY AND INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

Mississippi Mills Public Library supports the right by teens and young adults to select materials appropriate to their needs without censorship. The library's Teens/Young Adults collection, policies and services are consistent with the concepts of intellectual freedom, defined by the CLA, OLA and *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

1. The 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.
2. Library staff should conduct interviews to better understand what each teen/young adult wants and needs.
3. Library staff will point out the variety of resources available in all areas of the Library as appropriate.

PROGRAMS

The staff will actively involve teens/young adults in planning and implementing programs for this age group.

1. TAG Teen Advisory Group. Our TAG is a venue for teens in Grades 9 through 12 to:
 - a) Develop leadership skills
 - b) Create library programs
 - c) Influence teen collection
 - d) Gain community service hours by volunteering at library programs such as travelogues, technology workshops and other library events
 - e) Write book reviews for review blog
 - f) Create book or art displays
 - g) Make recommendations to improve teen spaces

SAFETY IN THE LIBRARY

The Mississippi Mills Public Library staff 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 the Conduct of Patrons Policy, or a child is left alone as outlined in the Children in the Library Policy. There are two specific situations that require specific guidance:

1. Truancy – If a school-age child is noticed to be spending considerable time in the Library during the school day, staff may check with the individual and ask that a parent confirm with the Library that he/she is aware of the children’s whereabouts. This applies to those up to the age of 16.
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. Staff may offer to take a message and ask the child to call the person back. In the case of a missing person, 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 members 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 staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or youth 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 required in CYFSA s.136 (1).

Appendix A (next page)

APPENDIX A

Ontario Library Association – Teen’s 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 Young Adult 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 program 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 the teen's 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, life- long 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 services 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 of those with special needs. The Library provides services by teen specialists as well as by others who are trained to serve teens.

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.

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
 - Conduct of Patrons
 - Children in the Library
- Southern Ontario Library Service, Trillium Public Library: Sample Policies