



## Children and Youth Services Policy

Board motion number:

Date of next review: April 2028

Date: April 24, 2024

Date of original motion: April 22, 2009

Policy type: Operational

Chair's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Purpose

The Orangeville Public 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. This policy sets out the services to be offered for children and youth.

### Scope

The services described in this policy are intended to meet the needs of children and youth, as well as parents, guardians and adults who work with children, or are interested in children's literature.

### Policy

#### Rights of the Child

The Orangeville Public Library:

- a) endeavours to provide these services based on the principles stated in the Ontario Library Association's Children's Rights in the Public Library, 1988. See Appendix A
- b) has endorsed and adopted the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph - Children's Charter of Rights, 2007. See Appendix B
- c) endeavours to provide these services based on the principles stated in the Ontario Library Association's Teen's Rights in the Public Library, 2010. See Appendix C

- d) endeavours to provide these services in support of the OLA's statement on School Boards Banning & Restricting Books released November, 2023. See Appendix D

## **Services**

Library services support children and young people's right to intellectual freedom. Children and youth are entitled to access to information to become active and knowledgeable participants in society.

### **1) Collections:**

The children's and youth collections will meet high quality standards and reflect the changing educational, informational and cultural needs, as well as personal/leisure interests, of children and youth.

Materials for children and youth will be selected according to the Library's Collection Development Policy to remain up-to-date and help support school curriculum and/or projects. It is the goal of the Orangeville Public Library to provide a wide range of general information for children and youth that will reflect evolving needs and interests.

### **2) Programming:**

Programming for children, youth and parents, both in and out of the library, will provide information, invite discussion, encourage curiosity, spark creativity, and foster a love of literacy and lifelong learning. Children's and youth programs share knowledge, provide entertainment, and/or incorporate literacy rich experiences based on trends in early childhood education and library best practice. Programs for children and youth aim to support the use of the collection and library resources.

This policy will be applied in conjunction with the Program Policy.

The library will provide regular programs, special events, activities and outreach for children and youth that supports the organizations strategic directions to connect, discover and soar, and values of inclusivity, curiosity, lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, and trust. All programs for children and youth support one or more of the forms of literacy the library works to uphold:

- Digital Literacy
- Environmental Literacy
- Foundational Literacy
- Financial Literacy
- Visual Literacy
- Informational Literacy

- Media Literacy
- Physical Literacy
- Intercultural Literacy
- Emotional Literacy
- Civic Literacy

Programs for children and youth will fall into one of three tiers: core, knowledge and engagement, and critical, to ensure they are supporting the library's vision, strategic directions, values, goals and objectives, and meeting the needs of children and youth in the community.

Where possible, and to increase accessibility for all, programs are offered without registration. The library will restrict the number of participants and implement registration based on the facility's size, format, fire safety or staff availability and will be enforced by the staff programmer in charge.

In the case of registered programs, regular attendance is encouraged for the child or youth to benefit. Staff may ask any participant who has missed two consecutive weeks without notification to forfeit their spot to accommodate those on a wait list.

Some programs may limit the age of children or youth, and the number of children per accompanying adult. 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.

The Orangeville Public Library aims to offer programs that are low or no-cost with the majority being free for all to enjoy. For certain programs, fees may be applied to offset the cost of supplies.

Library staff prioritize safety, well-being and respect for all patrons. All persons visiting the library, including children and youth, are expected to abide by the Rules of Conduct and Rzone Policy.

In accordance with the Children in the Library Policy, parents or caregivers are responsible for the behaviour of any child while in the library, including in a program setting. Staff will assist with empathy and aim to work with parents but are not accountable for managing dysregulated or disruptive behaviour.

### 3) Library Space

The library will provide thoughtfully planned areas for children that are distinct from the adult area. These areas will be visually stimulating so that children can distinguish their own space from the rest of the library. Space for children and youth will have furniture, shelves and equipment that are designed for and accessible to all children in an age-appropriate and friendly atmosphere.

The library will ensure that signage is clear and age appropriate.

The children's area (Storyland) is an interactive learning environment where controlled noise levels are tolerated, and young users are invited to explore the library materials and services in their own way. Manipulatives and technologies may be incorporated to invite discovery and spark learning.

### **Responsibilities of the Parent/Guardian**

Parents are responsible for monitoring the use of services, programs, and collections by their children. By signing the child's respective library card, the parent(s) accepts responsibility for all material borrowed by the child that becomes damaged, lost, or otherwise deemed unusable. The library does not act in loco parentis—in place of the parent.

Library staff cannot assume responsibility for the safety and well-being of children and youth left unattended.

See the Orangeville Public Library Children in the Library Policy.

## **Appendix A**

### **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.

## **Appendix B**

### **Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph – Children’s Charter of Rights**

All children deserve basic rights and freedoms. A fair share of society’s resources must be devoted to ensuring this. While families are responsible for raising their children, all levels of government, in partnership with communities, have a duty to support families by putting the health and well-being of children first.

All children in Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph have a right to:

1. A quality of life that meets their physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social needs.
2. Have basic needs met including nutritious food, a healthy environment and a safe and comfortable place to live.
3. Access quality and affordable child-care, early education programs and/or parenting support.
4. Safe places and time to play, and access to affordable recreational activities.
5. Quality education to enable them to reach their full potential.
6. Quality time with their families and/or other nurturing and positive role models throughout their childhood.
7. Protection from neglect, abuse and exposure to family violence.
8. Be accepted for who they are, and believe what they want without being discriminated against.

## **Appendix C**

### **OLA Position on Teen's Rights in the Public Library**

Teens in Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom.
2. Equal access to the full range of materials, services, and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their unique needs.
3. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.
4. Collections that specifically meet the needs of teens.
5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.
6. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service at every service point.
7. Library Programs and Services appropriate for Teens.
8. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in teen services.
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.

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

## Appendix D



November 2023

### OLA on School Boards Banning & Restricting Books

The Ontario Library Association (OLA) is deeply concerned by the growing number of attempts to restrict access to books by some school boards. This trend is particularly alarming as books that reflect 2SLGBTQIA+ perspectives, or featuring racialized characters and those with diverse gender identities, are disproportionately targeted by such censorship. As Canada's largest library association, we stand in solidarity with our members in defending the fundamental right of children to read and access information. We also stand with 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, racialized and all other underrepresented people who have had their voices and stories suppressed throughout Canadian history and beyond.

It is the position of OLA that all young people deserve to not only see *themselves* reflected in the books they read, but to also be exposed to the worldviews and lived experiences of *others*, particularly those of marginalized and equity-deserving groups. Reading a diverse selection of books offers an opportunity for young people to broaden their understanding of the world, building empathy and compassion, and preparing them to become proactive members of society.

In attempting to restrict access, or outright ban, literary or artistic images, ideas, and/or information, under the guise of “protecting” children, school boards inevitably create an unsafe environment by erasing the history and lived experiences of others. Such censorship also ultimately undermines the bridge of understanding being built among children of diverse backgrounds and identities, depriving them of the opportunity to learn how to navigate differences and develop critical awareness of their environments.

The OLA denounces any attempt to ban or restrict age-appropriate books on the grounds that they do not align with the personal beliefs and biases of school board members. These actions not only contravene the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion upheld by provincial and federal law, but also often contradict the inclusivity policies set forth by school boards themselves, as well as teacher federations. In these challenging times, it has become crucial for children, especially those from 2SLGBTQIA+ and other minority communities, to have access to stories that celebrate and affirm them. We urge all school boards to critically rethink their policies and procedures around banning and restricting access to books.

Approved unanimously by OLA Board on November 13, 2023