
Subject: Responsibility for Children who use the Library
Effective: December 2003
Revised: *August 2023*

1.0 PURPOSE

This policy defines:

- responsibilities for ensuring the safety and protection of children while they are using the library; and
- responsibilities for ensuring the safety and protection of children while attending library-sponsored activities held outside the library.

2.0 APPLICATION

This policy applies to all NBPLS staff, volunteers, and members of public library boards as well as library patrons.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Caregiver means a person in whom a parent, legal guardian, has temporarily entrusted with the care, supervision and control of the child in his/her absence.

Child refers to a person under the age of 12 based on subsection 31(4) of the [Family Services Act](#) (see section 4.0 of this policy).

Library refers to the physical facilities provided for under the [New Brunswick Public Libraries Act](#).

Library-sponsored activity refers to activities, programs or events held under the supervision and direction of library staff or a public library board.

Youth refers to a person between the ages of 12 and 18.

Public library board refers to the body established under the [New Brunswick Public Libraries Act](#) and the roles and responsibilities established for the Board therein.

4.0 LEGAL AUTHORITY

[Family Services Act](#) – Subsection 31(4)

Any person who, having the care of a child under the age of twelve years, or a child who is physically, emotionally or intellectually disabled, leaves the child for an unreasonable length of time without making reasonable provision for the care, supervision and control of the child, commits an offence.

[Education Act](#) – Section 21

(2) Subject to any policies or directives of the District Education Council concerned, every teacher shall

(b) maintain proper order and discipline on the part of pupils under the teacher's supervision during school activities off school property

5.0 GOALS / PRINCIPLES

While children are particularly welcome in public libraries, children under the age of 12, or children requiring supervision are the responsibility of their parent, legal guardian, or a caregiver and should not be left unattended.

6.0 REQUIREMENTS / STANDARDS

6.1 GENERAL USE OF THE LIBRARY

- 6.1.1** Children under the age of 12 should be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, and should not be left unattended at the library. It is the responsibility of the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver to supervise and safeguard their children.
- 6.1.2** Signs must be posted in all public libraries, clearly stating that children under the age of 12 should be attended by a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver.

6.2 UNATTENDED CHILDREN (UNDER 12)

- 6.2.1** Action may not be required in every instance in which a staff member suspects a child is unattended in the library. Staff should exercise judgment and should seek assistance from their immediate supervisor when uncertain as to whether action is required
- 6.2.2** Action is required in the following situations:
- If the child is hurt and requires medical attention, staff should seek immediate medical attention for the child, and notify the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, if possible. Staff should not wait until the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver has been reached, nor for the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver to arrive before seeking medical attention.

- At no time should a staff member leave a child unattended after closing the library. If the staff member has reason to believe that the child has been abandoned or left without means of returning home, and parents/ legal guardians or caregivers cannot be reached, policing authorities may be contacted.
- If staff has reason to believe that a child is being left unattended on a continual basis, staff must report these findings to their immediate supervisor for appropriate action.

6.3 YOUTH (12-18)

6.3.1 In general, youth may use public libraries or attend library-sponsored events held within or outside the library without parental supervision.

6.4 ATTENDANCE AT LIBRARY-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE LIBRARY

6.4.1 Children under the age of 12 attending a library-sponsored activity within the premises of the library may be left by the parent, legal guardian, or caretaker in the room where a program is taking place, but the parent, legal guardian, or caretaker should remain available at the library should a problem concerning the child develop.

6.4.2 A parent, legal guardian, or caregiver may be required to stay in the room with a child whose behavior is disruptive.

6.4.3 A parent, legal guardian, or caregiver may be required to stay in the room with a youth needing parental supervision.

6.4.4 In accordance with NBPLS Policy 1059 – Patron Conduct, a child/youth who is behaving in a disruptive manner may be required to leave the premises. In such cases, the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver should be present, whenever possible, before a child under the age of 12 is removed from the premises.

6.4.5 A class of students accompanied by a teacher is, under subsection 21(2) (b) of the [Education Act](#), the supervisory responsibility of the teacher; therefore, he/she must remain with the students.

6.5 LIBRARY-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES HELD OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY

6.5.1 Transportation to and from library-sponsored events is the responsibility of the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver.

- NBPLS staff are not authorized to transport a child/youth to or from a library-sponsored event, nor are volunteers or public library board members authorized to do so on behalf of library staff.

6.5.2 A parent, legal guardian, or caregiver must accompany a child under the age of 12 attending a library-sponsored activity held outside of the library

and must stay at the event in case a problem concerning the child develops.

- If a child under the age of 12 arrives without a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, the child must remain under the supervision of a library employee until their parent, legal guardian, or caregiver arrives.

6.5.3 The presence of a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver may be required for youth needing supervision.

6.6 FOOD AND BEVERAGES

6.6.1 When serving food/beverages during a library-sponsored activity, library staff will inform parents/legal guardians/caregivers in advance by means of a posted notice during the activity and notation on the registration form (where applicable) stating that “***Food/beverages may be served. If your child has an allergy, please inform library staff.***”

7.0 GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff should use every opportunity to communicate the requirements and parental responsibilities under this policy to parents/ legal guardians or caregivers.

8.0 REGIONAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

In consultation with the Provincial Office, Regional Directors may develop additional guidelines and procedures consistent with and necessary to support this policy.

9.0 REFERENCES

Education Act. (<http://laws.gnb.ca/en/BrowseTitle>).

Family Services Act. (<http://laws.gnb.ca/en/BrowseTitle>).

New Brunswick Public Libraries Act. (<http://laws.gnb.ca/en/BrowseTitle>).

Related NBPLS Policy:

Policy 1059 – Patron Conduct. New Brunswick Public Library Service.

10.0 CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

NBPLS Provincial Office, (506) 453-2354