
Smiths Falls Public Library



Policy Type: **Operational**

Policy Number: **OP-19**

Policy Title: **Young Adults in the Library**

Policy Approval Date:
May 17, 2022

Last Review Date:
November 25, 2025

The Smiths Falls 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 the responsibilities for the safety and supervision of young adults in the library.

The Smiths Falls 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. **See Appendix A.**

Section 1: Services

1. Collections:

- a) The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive young adult collection based on the Materials Selection policy (OP-12).
- b) The collection for young adults will meet best practice standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of young adults.
- c) Access to adult materials will not be restricted by library staff as it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to decide on the suitability for their young adults.

2. Reference and Readers Advisory:

- a) Library staff will utilize the full range of library collections, technology, and resources to answer all users' requests for advice on selecting books and for information, regardless of age and without judgment, with confidentiality and respect.
- b) Library staff will engage in meaningful and age-appropriate conversation to better understand what each young adult wants and needs.

- c) Library staff will point out the variety of resources available in all areas of the library as appropriate.

3. Programs and Partnerships

- a) The library will provide programming for young adults, both within the library and within the community, to stimulate creative potential and to encourage and facilitate the habit of reading, independent learning, and lifelong use of the library.
- b) The library will provide educational, entertaining, and literacy-related programs and support for young adults.
- c) Library staff will actively involve young adults in the planning and implementation of programs for this age group.
- d) The number of participants for all programs will be restricted based on size of the facility, staff capacity and resources which may result in requirements to pre-register for programs.

Section 2: Library Space

- 1. The library will provide an area for young adults that is distinct from the adult and children's areas. While users of all ages are welcome to browse the young adult collection, use of the lounge furniture in this area is restricted to young adults.
- 2. The library will ensure that signage is clear and age appropriate.

Section 3: Staffing

- 1. The board will support a program of ongoing staff training and professional development in services for young adults.
- 2. The CEO will ensure that all staff members assigned to young adult services receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable library service.
- 3. The library staff will advocate for young adult services in the community by:
 - a) collaborating with agencies to promote love of reading, lifelong learning, and health and well-being
 - b) seeking funding sources to expand young adult services
 - c) networking with other agencies who provide young adult services in the community, region, and province
 - d) promoting the young adult services and collections to groups who could benefit from them (schools, youth groups, etc.)

Section 4: Safety of Teens/Young Adults in the Library

The Smiths Falls Public Library 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 *Library Code of Conduct (OP-15)*. However, library staff may intervene in the following situations:

1. Truancy:

If a young person (up to the age of 16) is noticed to be spending considerable time in the library during the school day, staff may check with the individual and ask that a caregiver confirm with that they are aware of the young person's whereabouts.

2. 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) When library staff members have reasonable grounds to suspect that a youth is, or may be, in need of protection, they will advise the Library CEO 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 – 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 YA 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.