



BRACEBRIDGE LIBRARY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Number: OP-41 Title: Teen & Youth Services Board Approval Date: September 2025	Category: Operational Policy Replacing: Children in the Library - Children & Young Adult Services #1 (2021) Year of next review: 2029
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PURPOSE

Bracebridge Library is committed to supporting the unique developmental, intellectual, and social needs of teens as they transition from childhood to adulthood. This policy outlines the Library’s approach to services, spaces, and responsibilities for teen patrons and their caregivers, while ensuring a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment. See Appendix A: Ontario Library Association’s *Position on Teen’s Rights in the Public Library*

This policy also sets out the responsibilities for the safety and supervision of teens/young adults in the library.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Teen Services

1.1 Collections

Bracebridge Library will maintain a dynamic and inclusive teen/young adult collection that reflects the diverse interests, identities, and needs of this age group (14-17years). Collection development will prioritize:

- Canadian authors and content
- Award-winning fiction and non-fiction
- Diverse formats (graphic novels, audiobooks, digital media)
- Curriculum support and life skill development
- Inclusive materials representing a wide range of voices and experiences

Teens will have access to all library collections. It is the responsibility of caregivers to determine the suitability of materials for their teen.

1.2 Programs

The Library offers engaging, developmentally appropriate programs for teens throughout the year, especially during school breaks, Professional Development days, and summer. Programs will aim to:

- Encourage reading for pleasure and personal growth

- Build creative and critical thinking skills
- Provide safe spaces for social connection
- Involve teens in planning, volunteering, and advisory input

Programs may require registration due to space, staffing, or safety considerations.

1.3 Reader's Advisory and Reference

Teens are entitled to confidential, respectful, and nonjudgmental service at all service points. Staff will:

- Engage in meaningful conversations to understand interests and needs
- Offer recommendations and support for research, study, and exploration
- Encourage teens to explore all library resources and collections

2. Teen Spaces

Bracebridge Library will provide a welcoming space specifically designed for teens that reflects their interests, encourages creativity, and supports both study and leisure. Teen spaces will:

- Be separate from children's and adult areas where possible
- Include comfortable, accessible seating, shelving, and technology
- Allow for respectful social interaction and conversation
- Be maintained as safe, inclusive, and youth-focused environments

3. Staffing and Community Engagement

The Library will provide ongoing professional development to ensure staff working with teens understand adolescent development, youth engagement, and inclusive service practices.

Staff responsible for teen services will:

- Promote library services to schools, youth groups, and community partners
- Collaborate with educators and local organizations
- Encourage teen participation in volunteer and advisory roles
- Advocate for teen services and resources within the library and within Muskoka

4. Safety, Supervision, and Conduct

Bracebridge Library is a public facility. While the Library is committed to providing a safe, respectful environment for all users, caregivers remain responsible for the behavior and well-being of teens under age 16.

4.1 Independent Use

Teens aged 12 and up are welcome to use the Library independently, provided they can follow the Code of Conduct and behave in a manner that is respectful of others and the space.

4.2 Truancy

If a teen under 16 is spending significant time in the library during school hours, staff may ask them to confirm with a caregiver or school that their whereabouts are known.

4.3 Privacy and Missing Persons

Library staff will not confirm over the phone or in person whether a specific individual is present in the library. In cases involving law enforcement or missing persons reports, staff will follow legal and privacy protocols.

5. Duty to Report

Under the **Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA), Section 125**, staff are required to report to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) if they suspect that a child or youth under 16 may be in need of protection. Staff who are concerned about a 16- or 17-year-old may report voluntarily.

If a staff member has reasonable grounds to suspect a youth is in need of protection, they will consult with the CEO and report as required under law.

RELATED DOCUMENTATION:

Ontario's *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*. S.O. 2017, CHAPTER C.14, sections 74, 84 (1), 125, 136 (3); Bracebridge Library *OP-11 Code of Conduct*; Bracebridge Library *OP-09 Collection Development*; Bracebridge Library *OP-14 Internet Services & Technology*
Bracebridge Library *OP-04 Membership, Circulation & Collection Use*

REVISIONS:

Children & Young Adult Services #1 (2021) ; Children & Young Adult Services #2 (2021)



∴ 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:

7 Developmental Needs of Teens	5 Core Values of service to teens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical activity, • Competence and achievement, • Self definition, • Creative expression, • Positive social Interaction with Peers and Adults, • Structure and Clear Limits, • Meaningful Participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting and responding to unique YA needs, • Providing equal access, • Empowering Youth through participation, • Engaging Teens in active collaboration, • Supporting healthy youth development.
<small>Excerpted from: Dorman, G. (1981). The Middle Grades Assessment Program: User’s Manual. Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence.</small>	<small>Core Values excerpted from Jones, P. (2002). <i>New directions for library service to young adults</i>. Chicago: American Library Association.</small>

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.