

# Young Adults’ Services Policy

<b>Policy Type:</b> Operational	<b>Policy Number:</b> OP-11
<b>Policy Title:</b> Young Adults’ Services Policy (Ages 14 to 17)	<b>Policy Approval Date:</b> August 2023
	<b>Policy Review Date:</b> August 2026

## Introduction:

The Norfolk County 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.

## Purpose:

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 Norfolk County 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.

## Definitions:

A *child* is a library patron age 13 years and under. They are issued a **juvenile library card** which restricts the loan of “R” rated DVD’s and Blu-ray discs.

A *young adult* is a library patron between the ages of 14 and 17 years. They are issued a **young adult card** which restricts the loan of “R” rated DVD’s and Blu-ray discs.

An *adult* is a library patron age 18 and over. There are no loaning restrictions placed upon an **adult card**.

## Section 1: Services

### 1. Collections:

- a) The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designate will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive teen/young adult collection based on the Collection Development Policy OP-03.

- b) The teen/young adult collections will meet high standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of children and teens as well as trends in society.
- c) In selection of materials, the library staff will give consideration to developing collections to address the issues of:
  - i. Canadian authors and content
  - ii. award-winning titles
  - iii. non-fiction material that complements the local school curriculum
  - iv. age appropriate formats

## **2. Reference and Readers Advisory**

- a) The library 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.
- b) Library staff will point out the variety of resources available in all areas of the library as appropriate.
- c) Only a parent or caregiver has the right to use their own cultural, religious or other views and beliefs to share or censor the reading, viewing or listening choices for their young adult.

## **3. Programs**

- a) The Norfolk County Public Library will provide programming for young adults, both in and out of the library, to stimulate creative potential and to encourage and facilitate the habit of reading, independent learning and use of the library.
- b) The Norfolk County Public Library will provide educational, entertaining and literature related programs and support for young adults, such as programs for summer, school breaks and professional development days that will be primarily book based and will highlight various aspects of the collection while encouraging reading for pleasure or leisure activities.
- c) Where possible, maker space equipment and programs will be developed for and with young adults. Programs that explore the topics of STREAM (science, technology, research, engineering, arts and math) will be created and will incorporate materials in the collections.
- d) The library staff will actively involve young adults in planning and implementing programs for this age group.
- e) The number of participants for all programs will be restricted based on size of the facility, fire department limits, staff supervision available, etc.; this will be enforced by the programmer in charge.

## **4. Program Evaluation**

- a) All programs are designed with measurable outcomes and are evaluated.

- b) To determine community needs and interests, the Library reviews suggestions for events and programs and uses various mechanisms to gather community input to assist in setting programming priorities and plans.
- c) The Library will make available a process for user feedback and expressions of opinions and concerns about programs.
- d) The Library will make a process for community submissions available.

## **5. Internet Services**

- a) The Norfolk County Public Library does not filter or restrict legal Internet access.
- b) Users of the Norfolk County Public Library Internet are subject to federal, provincial and municipal legislation regulating internet use, including the provisions under the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Criminal Code regarding obscenity, child pornography, hatred and sedition. The use of the library Internet services of illegal purposes such as, but not limited to, display of sexually explicit, threatening, abusive material is prohibited and may result in prosecution. (*OP-07 Internet Services Policy*).

## **Section 2: Library Space**

1. The library will provide a well-planned area for teens/young adults that is distinct from the adult area.
2. This area will have furniture, shelves and equipment that are designed for teens/young adults and which are fully accessible.
3. The library will ensure that signage is clear and age appropriate.
4. This area will be an interactive learning environment where controlled noise levels are tolerated.

## **Section 3: Staffing**

1. The Norfolk County Public Library Board will support a program of ongoing staff training and professional development in services for teens/young adults.
2. The CEO will ensure that all staff members 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) seek support for young adult services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc.
  - c) networking with other agencies who provide service to young adult services in the community, region and province
  - d) communicating with principals, teacher librarians and teachers in the community
  - e) promoting the services and collections to groups who could benefit from them

## **Section 4: Safety in the Library**

The Norfolk County 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 OP-04 Code of Conduct (Public) Policy, or a child is left alone as outlined in OP-10 Children's Services Policy. There are two specific situations which 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 they are aware of the children's whereabouts. This applies to those up to the age of 16. If a parent is not available, staff may contact the principal of their local school.
- 2. Missing Persons** – Library staff will not give information to any person over the telephone as to whether a youth is currently in the library or has been in the library recently. Library staff may offer to take a message and ask the youth to call the person back. In the case of a missing person, library staff will co-operate with the law enforcement agency requesting specific personal information.

**Related Documents:**

Norfolk County Public Library **Intellectual Freedom Policy (FN-04)**  
Norfolk County Public Library Policy **Collection Development (OP-03)**  
Norfolk County Public Library Policy **Code of Conduct (Public) (OP-04)**  
Norfolk County Public Library Policy **Internet Services (OP-07)**  
Norfolk County Public Library Policy **Children's Services (OP-10)**  
Norfolk County Public Library Policy **Circulation (OP-12)**

## **Appendix A – Ontario Library Association – Teens’ Rights in the Public Library/ Goals for Library Services for Teens:**

Young people are valuable members of the 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:

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### **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

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### **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.

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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 teens' 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.