

Children and Young People in the Library Policy

Community Services and Facilitation
COMM_22

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to determine guidelines for all stakeholders, including staff and the public, in relation to the presence of children and young people within the Whitsunday Regional Libraries.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all library premises of the Whitsunday Regional Council, employees, and library patrons.

Applicable Legislation

This policy refers to the *Libraries Act 1988*, *Child Protection Act 1999*, *Working with Children (Risk Management & Screening) Act 2000* and *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*.

Policy Statement

Whitsunday Regional Libraries are committed to serving the information, educational, recreational, and cultural needs of children and young people. The Library strives to provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all and provides targeted resources and programs to meet the needs of children and young people.

The Library has a duty of care to ensure the safety of customers and staff, and enjoyment of the library by all. A commonsense approach to customer service is recommended at all times. The Library requires that customers take responsibility for their behaviour or actions while on library premises. The behaviour of young people on library premises is the responsibility of the young people themselves, their parents/carers, any responsible person accompanying them and if in a school group, their teachers, supervisors, and the school which they attend.

1. Access to resources

- 1.1. The Library encourages parents/carers to set their own family rules in consultation with their child. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to monitor the suitability of both physical and online library resources used by their children. Library staff are available to help children and their parents/carers effectively navigate collections.
- 1.2. It is not the responsibility of the Library or its staff to exercise a supervisory or restrictive role in determining which library resources children or young people may use or access, except where material is classified as restricted under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*.
- 1.3. Library materials which are not classified, or are classified "Unrestricted", "General" or "PG" (Parental Guidance) are available to all library users. Items that have a classification of "MA15+" are legally available to members who are 15 years of age and over. Items that have a

Children and Young People in the Library Policy

Community Services and Facilitation COMM_22

classification of “R” (Restricted Audience over 18 years) are restricted and available only to library users who are 18 years of age and over.

- 1.4. The Library protects the public’s right to know, and does not monitor or control the content of materials offered through the internet. Internet content and activity is not censored or screened by use of filtering software. Responsibility of use of public computers lies solely with parents/carers. Please refer to the Access to Computers, Internet and WiFi in Council Libraries Policy for more information regarding the conditions of internet use.

2. Unattended children

- 2.1. Unsupervised children can be at risk in any public place, including public libraries. Library staff do not supervise children in the library and there is a risk that unattended children may leave the library at any time, hurt themselves or be approached by strangers. Please refer to the Library Visitor Conditions of Entry Policy for more information relating to unsupervised children.
- 2.2. It is required that children aged 0 – 8 years of age are directly supervised by a parent/carer at all times whilst in the library or when attending an organised children’s activity.
- 2.3. Parents/carers of children aged 9 to 12 years of age must remain in the building.
- 2.4. If library staff discover an unattended child on library premises the staff member will endeavour to contact a parent, carer or educator responsible for the child to collect the child. If such an arrangement cannot be made, the child will be considered at risk and the Queensland Police Service will be contacted.

3. School aged children during school hours

- 3.1. Library staff will contact the Truancy Officer or appropriate person from the school or parent if school aged children are in the library during school hours.

4. Working with children checks

- 4.1. Council requires library staff, volunteers and contractors who work directly with children to hold a current Blue Card (issued by Department of Justice and Attorney-General).

Definitions

CEO refers to the Chief Executive Officer of the Whitsunday Regional Council appointed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009*.

Council refers to the Whitsunday Regional Council

Employee refers to any employee, contractor, volunteer etc. of the Council

Library refers to the Whitsunday Regional Libraries

Child/Children refers to children aged from birth to 12 years

Young person/people refers to young adults aged from 13 to 18 years

Children and Young People in the Library Policy

Community Services and Facilitation
COMM_22

Patron refers to anyone using a Whitsunday Regional Library

Parent/Carer refers to a parent, an assigned adult or young person 16 years or over

Unattended refers to not in the immediate company of a responsible parent or carer

Unsupervised children refers to children under the age of 13 years who cannot identify their parent/carers to library staff.

Related Documents

[Access to Computers, Internet and WiFi in Council Libraries Policy](#)

[Library Visitor Conditions of Entry Policy](#)

[WRC Child Protection Risk Management Policy](#)

Human Rights Compatibility Statement

This Policy has been assessed as compatible with the Human Rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

COUNCIL POLICY			
Date Adopted by Council	13/12/2023	Council Resolution	OM2023/12/13.12
Effective Date	13/12/2003	Next Review Date	
Responsible Officer(s)	Manager of Governance and Administration	Revokes	Nil