

Care of Children and Youth in Libraries Policy

Background

This policy provides guidance for library staff and users when children and youth are unaccompanied and/or not actively supervised in any library in the Christchurch City Libraries network.

Statement of Welcome

Children and youth are welcomed by Christchurch City Libraries to use its resources, services and spaces in a safe and respectful manner.

This is encapsulated in Christchurch City Libraries' Bicultural Service Philosophy, our values should inform staff interactions on how to engage in these conversations:

***Whanaungatanga:** We work together to build relationships through shared experiences and by providing people with a sense of belonging.*

***Māramatanga:** We find opportunities to share and gain knowledge and understanding and are able to articulate our policy clearly in respectful and appropriate ways with customers.*

***Kaitiakitanga:** We look after our environment and our shared spaces, customers and colleagues.*

***Manaakitanga:** We are welcoming to all library users, and show generosity, care and respect in our interactions with others.*

Scope

This policy applies to all library users during library opening hours and everyday library use. For the purposes of this policy, caregivers must be 14 years and older in accordance with the Te Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions are used:

- Unaccompanied child refers to any child whose parent/caregiver is not on library premises
- Actively supervised means that the parent/caregiver has the child within eyesight, is watching and ensuring the child is safe and is not disrupting staff or other library users

Principles of Care

- The safety and wellbeing of children and youth in the library is a guiding principle at all times, and library staff will do their utmost to provide a safe and comfortable environment for all children and young people, while recognising the needs of other library users.
- Parents or caregivers are responsible for the safety and behaviour of their children, and under law as per the Summary Offences Act 1981 must make reasonable provision for the care and supervision of their children.

- The Library recognises it is reasonable to expect older children to visit on their own. Each situation involving an unaccompanied or unsupervised child of any age will be considered on its own merits and is at the discretion of library staff.
- Library staff will act on any reasonable concerns about the care or safety of unaccompanied children in the library but will not assume responsibility for the care of those children.
- Action may be taken by library staff if they consider that a child in the company of an older child under 14 years of age is not under adequate care and supervision.
- If there is recurring disruptive or inappropriate behaviour that impacts on other library users, the young people responsible may be asked to leave the library. This action may also be taken in the case of disruptive younger children accompanied by a parent or caregiver.
- Police may be contacted if the caregiver or supervising adult cannot be found or contacted, particularly if the unaccompanied child is in distress.

Procedure

The Library will comply with the following legislation:

- Te Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- Education Act 1989
- Summary Offences Act 1981

and policies:

- *Christchurch City Council Protection of Children Policy 2018*