

Care of Children and Young People in Libraries Policy

Purpose

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

This policy applies to all users of library spaces during opening hours. 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 and the Summary Offences Act 1981.

Policy Statement

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

This policy is informed by the [Christchurch City Libraries Customer Code of Conduct](#) and Bicultural Service Philosophy of Whanaunatanga, Māramatanga, Kaitiakitanga and Maanakitanga which will inform how staff should engage in conversations with children and young people.

Procedure

- The safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the library is always a guiding principle, 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.
- Caregivers are responsible for the safety and behaviour of children under their care and under the law as per the Summary Offences Act 1981 which states that caregivers must make reasonable provision for the care and supervision of their children.
- Libraries are busy public places open to all, and staff cannot identify which members of the public may be dangerous or unpredictable.
- Each situation involving unaccompanied or unattended children or young people of any age will be considered on its own merits and is at the discretion of the library staff who will be informed by law.
- Library staff will act on any reasonable concerns about the care and safety of unaccompanied or unattended children and young people in library spaces but will not assume responsibility for the care of those children or young people.
- Library staff do not take over caregiver responsibilities for children and young people when they are in the library, nor are they expected to supervise children or young people when carrying out their work duties.
- Christchurch City Libraries staff do not supervise children's or young people's use of collections or internet facilities, except where there are restrictions in place.
- Action will be taken by library staff if they consider that children or young people are not under adequate care and supervision.
- If there is recurring disruptive or inappropriate behaviour that impacts on other library users or which breaches the [Customer Code of Conduct](#), the individuals responsible may be asked to leave the library.
- Police will be contacted if the caregiver cannot be found or contacted, particularly if unaccompanied children or young people are in distress, as they may be considered at risk.

Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
<i>Actively supervised</i>	The caregiver has the child or young person within eyesight, is watching and ensuring the child or young person is safe and is not disrupting staff or other library users.
<i>Unaccompanied child or young person</i>	Any child or young person whose caregiver is not in the library or on the same floor where libraries have more than one floor.
<i>Unattended child or young person</i>	Any child or young person who is not being actively supervised by a caregiver.
<i>Whanaungatanga</i>	Working collectively to build a sense of belonging within the library spaces as well as creating meaningful relationships through shared experiences.
<i>Māramatanga</i>	Creating opportunities with customers to gain, share and understand our policy in a manner in which all participants are respected and acknowledged clearly.
<i>Kaitiakitanga</i>	Acknowledging that all shared library spaces, colleagues and library users are being looked after in a respectful and safe manner.
<i>Manaakitanga</i>	Providing a warm and welcoming environment for all library users by creating a caring and respectful atmosphere and encouraging interactions with all library users.

References and related documents

Document	Link
<i>Library Code of Conduct</i>	Customer Code of Conduct Christchurch City Libraries Ngā Kete Wānanga o Ōtautahi
<i>Te Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 Children's and Young People's Well-Being Act 1989</i>	Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 No 24 (as at 06 October 2023), Public Act – New Zealand Legislation
<i>Vulnerable Children Act 2014</i>	Vulnerable Children Act 2014 No 40 (as at 01 May 2018), Public Act Contents – New Zealand Legislation
<i>Education Act 1989</i>	Education Act 1989 No 80 (as at 01 August 2020), Public Act Contents – New Zealand Legislation
<i>Summary Offences Act 1981</i>	Summary Offences Act 1981 No 113 (as at 28 October 2021), Public Act – New Zealand Legislation

Policy name	Care of children and young people in libraries
Adoption date	13 June 2024
Date of most recent review	13 June 2024
Review date	13 June 2027
Department responsible	Libraries and Information Unit
Position responsible	Programmes, Events and Learning Manager