

# LIBRARIES' CHILDREN POLICY

<b>Responsible Department:</b>	Corporate and Community Services
<b>Responsible Section:</b>	Cultural Facilities
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Library Coordinator

## Objective

To provide a framework and set of guidelines to manage the provision of services to children and young people who visit the Narrabri Shire Council's libraries.

## Introduction

Narrabri Shire Libraries are committed to serving the information and recreation needs of young people. The libraries strive to provide a welcoming environment and provides targeted resources and programs to meet the needs of young people.

## Policy

### 1. Service Statement

The Narrabri Shire Libraries' services to young people include:

- fiction, non-fiction and recreational books
- magazines
- computer games for in-library use (subject to observing copyright)
- CDs
- DVDs
- computer and internet access
- assistance from staff in accessing collections and information
- homework help
- ebooks and eresources including streaming services
- internet training
- literacy programs
- space for activities or study

## 2. Parent's Responsibility Statement

### 2.1. Access to Resources

- 2.1.1. The Narrabri Shire libraries' general collection may contain publications that have been classified 'Unrestricted' and films and computer games that have been classified 'G' (General), 'PG' (Parental Guidance) or 'M' (Mature) in accordance with the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995 (Cth). This material is available to all persons, including young persons, without restriction.
- 2.1.2. Narrabri Shire libraries also offers access to films via streaming services, which may include films that have been classified 'MA' and 'R'. Members under the age of 18 are not permitted to access films with an 'R' rating, and members under the age of 15 may only access films rated 'MA' with the consent of their parent or guardian.
- 2.1.3. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child's selection and use of materials in the libraries' general collection accords with any restrictions the family may wish to set. Narrabri Shire libraries encourages parents/guardians to consult with their child to develop clear rules regarding access to resources that accord with the family's personal values and beliefs.
- 2.1.4. The libraries promote and support young people's access to information, including electronic information through its internet facilities. Library staff are available to assist young people in the use of the Internet, and to recommend websites on particular subjects. A number of appropriate websites have been selected for inclusion in the library's electronic collections.

### 2.2. Unattended Children

- 2.2.1. Libraries are not to be used by parents, guardians or carers as an alternative to children's services that provide licensed care facilities, such as care by an agency or a day care facility. Young children left alone in a library can become distressed, bored or disruptive. Parents, guardians or carers that attempt to do so are potentially putting their child at risk of harm. Libraries do not have the facilities or appropriate licences to attend to children who are sick, injured or hungry.
- 2.2.2. Unsupervised children can be at risk in any public place, including public libraries. Narrabri Shire libraries' 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.
- 2.2.3. Children left unattended in a public library may be classed as a child or young person at risk of harm under section 23 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) and may be reported as such to the Secretary of the Department of Family & Community Services. Parents who leave a child unattended in a public library are exposing their child to potential harm and may be committing an offence under section 228 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW).

2.2.4. Young people who disturb other library users may be removed from the library under clause 17 of the Library Regulation 2018 (NSW). This clause covers any unwanted behaviour, manner or condition that is likely to give offence to any person in the library or to interfere with any other person’s use of the library.

### 2.3. Children’s Conduct

2.3.1. Disruptive and unsociable behaviour are not permitted in the Narrabri Shire Libraries. Customers are expected to refrain from accessing inappropriate computer materials and sites. All library users are to allow bags and property to be inspected by staff as requested.

## 3. Authority to remove individuals from the library

Under the Library Regulation 2010, all library staff have the authority to order young people from the library if they have contravened this Policy. This clause covers any unwanted behaviour, manner or condition that is likely to give offence to any person in the library or to interfere with any other person’s use of the library.

## References

- Library Council of New South Wales - Children’s Policy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries
- NSW Government - Office of the Children’s Guardian – Child Safe Standards

## History

Minute Number	Meeting Date	Description of Change
	August 25, 2020	New Policy
153/2020	September 22, 2020	Adopted