

LIBRARIES CHILDREN POLICY

Responsible Department: Planning and Sustainability
Responsible Section: Library Services
Responsible Officer: Manager Tourism and Cultural Services

Objective

This policy aims to provide a framework to manage the provision of services to children and young people visiting Narrabri Shire Council's Libraries.

Introduction

Narrabri Shire Libraries are committed to serving the information and recreation needs of young people and children in the community. The libraries strive to provide a welcoming environment, with targeted resources and programs to meet young people's needs.

Policy

1. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Children/Young Person	A person under the age of 18.
Child Related Employment	Engagement in work that is designated by relevant legislation as Child Related Employment
Electronic Resources	Any resource that is created, stored, processed, presented, or produced by electronic means.

2. Child Safe Principles

- 2.1. Narrabri Shire Council is committed to being a child safe organisation in its contact with children and young people.
- 2.2. The General Manager will ensure that, where staff hold a reasonable suspicion of harm or neglect towards children, it is reported to the appropriate authority.
- 2.3. The General Manager will ensure that where a disclosure is made by a child or young person, it is:
 - (a) Treated seriously;
 - (b) Afforded all appropriate confidentiality, subject to the law.
- 2.4. Despite 2.3(b) above, in some circumstances disclosures are required to be reported to certain authorities and/or the child or young person's parents/guardians.
- 2.5. The General Manager will ensure that reportable conduct and reportable convictions are reported to the appropriate authority.
- 2.6. The General Manager will ensure that Council Staff who are identified as working in "child related employment" will hold a current Working with Children Check at all times.

3. Services

- 3.1. Narrabri Shire Council Libraries will supply the following services to young people:
- Fiction, non-fiction, and recreational books;
 - Magazines;
 - Computer games for in-library use;
 - 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 and/or study.

4. Access to Electronic Resources

- Only children or young people authorised by their parents to access electronic resources will be permitted to access Library electronic resources.
- Parents and guardians are solely responsible for their child's access to and use of the library's internet facilities, including access to sites, their subject matter, and content.
- Parents and guardians must ensure that their children or young person's use of the internet facilities accords with Council's Library Internet Policy.

5. Conduct of Children and Young People

- Children and young people are expected to comply with the provisions of Part 3 of the *Library Regulation 2018* (NSW).
- Children and young people are not to eat or drink in any Shire Library except in areas designated for that purpose, if any.
- Disruptive and anti-social behaviours are not permitted in Shire Libraries.
- Library users, including children and young people, are expected to refrain from accessing inappropriate media and documents.

6. Removal from the Library

- The *Library Regulation 2018* (NSW) permits Council staff to order children and young people from the library if they contravene this policy.
- Children and young people who contravene this policy may be removed from the library.
- Children and Young people who disturb other library users may be removed from the library.

7. Classification of Resources

- Council Libraries' general collection may contain resources that have been classified:
 - Unrestricted
 - General (G);
 - Parental Guidance (PG);
 - Mature (M);
 - Mature Audience (MA); and
 - Restricted (R).
- Music recordings classified as level 3 by the Australian Recording Industry Association will not be available to persons under 18 years of age.
- Resources classified unrestricted, G, and PG are available to all persons.
- Resources classified MA will only be available to persons aged fifteen (15) years or older.
- Resources classified R will only be available to persons aged eighteen (18) years or older.

- 7.6. Access to resources classified MA and R will be restricted in an appropriate manner.
- 7.7. MA classified material will not be screened or demonstrated in the library in the presence of the public.
- 7.8. Certain streaming services include material that is classified MA and R. Council Libraries will implement measures to restrict access to that material on those streaming services.
- 7.9. Some parents/guardians may wish to impose additional restrictions on the nature of material their child or young person has access to. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child's selection and use of materials in the general collection accords with any family-led restrictions.

8. Unattended Children

- 8.1. Libraries are not to be used by parents, guardians, or carers as an alternative to children's care facilities.
- 8.2. Libraries do not provide supervision to unattended children.
- 8.3. Where a child under 18 is left unattended and Council has a concern about the child's welfare, Council may report the child as a child at risk of harm to the relevant government authority.

9. Review

- 9.1. This policy will be reviewed within twelve (12) months of an Ordinary Council Election.
- 9.2. This policy may be reviewed at any other time when required.

References

- *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW).
- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (NSW).
- *Library Regulation 2018* (NSW).

History

Minute Number	Meeting Date	Description of Change
153/2020	September 22, 2020	Adopted
336/2022	October 18, 2022	Endorsed for Public Exhibition
362/2022	November 22, 2022	Adopted