



Parramatta City Library Service
LIBRARY CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY POLICY
Policy Number 069

Background:

Parramatta City Library service is focused on providing a quality service which meets the educational and informational requirements of young people.

This policy has been written to ensure the safety of both patrons and staff and the enjoyment of the Parramatta City Library service by all. The safety of Library patrons and staff is the ultimate consideration.

Objective:

To ensure the safety of patrons and staff, and their enjoyment of the Library service by all.

To clarify the role of the Library and that of the parent/guardian/carer in the supervision of children.

Scope:

This policy applies to all who wish to access the Parramatta City Library Service, including branch libraries.

Relationship to Legislation:

Library Act 1939

Library Regulation 2010

Classification Guidelines for Films and Computer Games 2005.

Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995 (Cth)

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

Related Strategies, Plans or Policies:

The Library Council of NSW - Access to Information in New South Wales Public Libraries Guideline

The Library Council of NSW: Children's Policy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries.
Revised July 2008

Parramatta City Library *Library Lending Policy*

Parramatta City Library *Library Membership Policy*

Parramatta City Library *Library Collection Management Policy*

Parramatta City Library *Library Technology Policy*

Parramatta City Library *Responsibilities of Library Users Policy*

Parramatta City Library *Library Study Room Guidelines*

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1. Policy Statement Title Library Children in the Library Policy

2. Policy Statement title

3. Definitions

4. Administration

Authorisation

Review

Version	Date Adopted	Date Superceded
2	1/7/12	1/7/14

Owner Belinda Kerr

Implementation

POLICY STATEMENT

1.0 Responsibility for Children

Parramatta City Council and its Libraries cannot take responsibility for children in the Library. The Library is not licensed as a child minding facility, and therefore cannot provide supervision of children. The role of Library staff is to help children and young adults to find Library resources and engage them in Library events and programs. A child is considered to be 17 years of age and under (unless otherwise specified).

10 years and under - Children who are 10 years and under **must** be supervised by a parent/guardian/carer who is eighteen years of age or older. Appropriate supervision requires that this responsible person be **within sight of children** in this age group at all times while in the Library building. All children under the age of 10 should be accompanied by an adult when using the library toilets.

1.1 Unattended Children

Unsupervised children can be at risk in any public place, including public libraries and the online environment. Parramatta City Library's 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. Unattended children may also be exposed to cyber bullying if using the internet. In addition, libraries do not have the facilities to attend to unattended children or children who are sick, injured or hungry. Should Library staff become aware of an unattended child the Library may call upon an appropriate authority. The Library and its staff are not responsible for any injury or upset which occurs at any time during a child's visit to the Library.

Children 10 years of age and under, left unattended in a public Library, may be classed as a child or young person at risk of harm under s. 23 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* and may be reported to an appropriate authority including the police or the NSW Department of Family and Community Services. A parent/guardian/carer who leave a child unattended in a public Library are exposing their child to potential harm, and may be committing an offence under s. 228 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.

Children 10 years and under cannot book study rooms and must be accompanied at all times by a parent/guardian/carer of eighteen years or older when using the study and meeting rooms.

During school hours:

- Students in years 10 and under are not permitted in the Library unless accompanied by a parent/carer
- Students in years 11 and 12 must show a school pass or school timetable in their own name showing they have free time, in order to stay in the Library. Students unable to provide a school pass or timetable showing free time will be asked to return to school
- no games are allowed to be played on the Library computers by school children.

1.2 Technology

A parent/guardian/carer who is eighteen years of age or older is responsible for their child's use of the Internet, in line with the Library's Technology policy. The Library is not responsible for monitoring a child's usage of the Internet - the parent/guardian/carer is responsible. This includes Internet usage on either the Library's computers or the parent/guardian/child's personal laptops/notebooks. Library staff do not supervise children in the Library so there is a risk that unsupervised children may be subject to cyber bullying.

When using the Library's computers children aged 10 years and under must be supervised by a parent/guardian/carer who is eighteen years of age or older. This adult must sit with the child. The Library has computers in the children's area for parents/guardians/carers to sit with children.

1.3 Behaviour in the Library

Parramatta City Council and the Library do not take any responsibility for the behaviour or actions of Library patrons while on Library premises. The behaviour of children on Library premises is the responsibility of the children themselves, their parent/guardian/carer, and if in a School group, their teachers, supervisors and the School which they attend.

The Library cannot be held responsible for behaviour of children and adults outside the Library.

An unsupervised child who displays ongoing and/or serious inappropriate behaviour may be asked for their name and contact details. Depending on the severity of the behaviour, the Library may contact an appropriate body including parent/guardian/carer/school/police or NSW Department of Family and Community Services.

Young people who disturb other Library users may be asked to leave the Library as per the *Library Regulation 2010*

The Library Manager may impose further restrictions on a child where it is deemed necessary, including banning the child from the Library for a period of time, or indefinitely, and suspension of Library membership privileges, including borrowing and access to Library PCs.

Inappropriate behavior in the Library disturbs other patrons and may include any of the following:

- Misuse of Library property
- Damaging Library property
- Disruption to other patrons (including raised voices, arguments, or loud mobile phone conversations or portable audio devices)
- Verbal or physical abuse
- Running/throwing/game playing
- Other behaviours deemed unsuitable by Library staff

Filming and/or photographing within any Library building is not permitted without prior permission of the Library Manager.

2.0 Library Activities & Programs

Library activities and programs are provided as outreach services. Children 10 years and under attending such events, including story time and holiday activities, must be supervised by a parent/guardian/carer who is eighteen years of age or older throughout these activities/programs.

Staff may require parent/guardian/carer to sign children in and out of particular Library activities and events.

Library staff have the right to refuse entry/attendance to Library events and activities. Patrons who are 15 minutes late to activities may also be refused attendance. The Library has the right to charge for events and activities.

Group visits to the Library should be made with appropriate supervision which should be discussed when prior arrangements for a visit are made. Children who visit the Library in a group must be accompanied by an appropriate number of teachers or adult carers depending on the group size and age, and rules of the school or organisation.

3.0 Access to Resources

The Library Council of NSW guideline, **Access to Information in New South Wales Public Libraries**, states that public libraries have a role as an unbiased source of information and ideas, including online content. The Library accepts responsibility for providing access to materials and information presenting as far as possible, all points of view on current & historical issues, including controversial issues.

The Library has no censorship role in its choice of the Library resources that form the collection. Collection material should not be rejected on the grounds that its content is controversial or likely to offend some sections of the Library's community.
(*Children's Policy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries*)

The Parramatta City Library's collections contain resources that have been classified in accordance with the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* (Cth).

Parramatta City Library does not censor resources used in or borrowed from the Library.

A parent/guardian/carer is responsible for monitoring their child's borrowing and use of Library resources, Library materials and technology usage. A parent/guardian/carer is responsible for ensuring that their child's selection and use of materials in the Library's general collection accords with any restrictions they may wish to set. Parramatta City Library encourages a parent/guardian/carer to consult with their child to develop clear rules and understanding regarding access to resources that accord with their personal values and beliefs.

The Library promotes and supports young people's access to information, including electronic information through the Internet. Library staff can recommend websites on particular subjects. A number of appropriate websites have been selected for inclusion in the Library's electronic collections.