

Draft Children, Young People and Library Services Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure access to library services for children and young people is provided in the safest, most responsible way.

The aim is to:

- Ensure children are aware of their rights and responsibilities when using library services
- Ensure parents/guardians are aware of the way in which library services are provided to children and young people
- Make parents aware of their responsibilities for children using library services
- Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities for children using library services.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the public who use the City of Canada Bay Library Service, and the City of Canada Bay staff and volunteers. Updates and/or changes to library collections and services may be made from time to time, in line with Council's policies, guidelines, and relevant delegation of authority.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Child	A person who is under 13 years of age.
Child safe organisation	An organisation in which child safety is embedded in planning, policy, and practices, and where the voices of children and young people are valued and actioned.
City of Canada Bay Library Service or the Library	Refers to Concord Library, Five Dock Library and The Learning Space, Rhodes and the resources and services provided by and within them.
Library members	Refers to members of the public that have joined the Library as full or online members.
Library visitors	Refers to any members of the public who use the Library including library members, non-members, and general visitors.
Staff	Refers to City of Canada Bay Council employees, contractors and volunteers that undertake tasks and deliver services.
Mandatory reporter	The legal obligation for a person who, in the course of their professional work or other paid employment, delivers health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services, or law enforcement, wholly or partly, to children (and managers in organisation providing such services).
Reportable allegation	An allegation that the employee has engaged in conduct that may be Reportable Conduct.
Reportable conduct	Includes a sexual offence, sexual misconduct, ill-treatment of a child, neglect of a child, an assault against a child, an offence of failing to care for a child, an offence of concealing a child abuse offence, and behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

Responsible Adult	A person aged 18 years or above who has permission from a parent or guardian to care for a child temporarily.
Responsible Person	A person who has permission from a parent or guardian to care for a child temporarily.
Young person	A person who is aged 13 years or above, but who is under the age of 18 years.

4. Policy principles

4.1 Statement of commitment

The City of Canada Bay is a Child Safe Community that recognises and advocates for the rights of children and young people. The Library Service is committed to serving the information and recreation needs of this group through targeted resources, services, and programs.

City of Canada Bay Library policies and procedures are informed by Council's *Children and Young Person Protection Policy 2020* and *Child Safe Code of Conduct* and aim to reduce the likelihood of harm to children, and to increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm, and responding appropriately to disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.

The City of Canada Bay Library Service provides a range of materials, services and programs designed to foster an appreciation of literature in children and young people and promote the development of information literacy skills. These include, but are not limited to:

- Fiction, Non Fiction and recreational books
- Magazines
- CDs
- DVDs
- eResources, including streaming services
- Assistance from staff in accessing collections and information
- Computer and internet access
- Literacy and recreational programs
- Space for activities and study.

4.2 Parental responsibility statements

4.2.1 Access to resources

Library staff guide and assist children and young people in finding and accessing resources appropriate to their interests and needs; however, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to set any boundaries or restrictions on materials accessed.

The City of Canada Bay Library Service's general collections are available to all persons and may contain publications that have been classified 'Unrestricted' and digital media that has been classified 'G' (General), 'PG' (Parental Guidance) or 'M' (Mature) in accordance with the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995 (Commonwealth)*. The Library encourages parents/guardians to talk with their child and develop clear rules regarding access to resources that fit in with the family's personal values and beliefs.

The Library 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 years are not permitted to access films with an 'R' rating, and members under the age of 15 years may only access films rated 'MA' with the consent of their parent/guardian.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child's selection and use of materials in the Library's general collection aligns with any restrictions the family may wish to set. The Library encourages parents/guardians to consult with their child to develop clear rules regarding access to resources that align with the family's personal values and beliefs.

The Library promotes and supports children's and young people's access to information, including electronic information through its internet facilities. Library staff are available to assist in the use of the internet and to recommend suitable websites. Parents/guardians remain responsible for their child's use of the internet as per the *Library Public Internet, WiFi and Computer Use Policy*.

4.2.2 Children 0-7 years old attending programs

Children 0-7 years old attending programs must be supervised by a parent, guardian or responsible adult at all times.

4.2.3 Children 8-12 years old attending programs

Supervised programs for children 8-12 years old operate during school holidays and after school. These programs will require participants to purchase a ticket. Participants will be accepted into the program on the following conditions:

- Children must be in the appropriate age range for their workshop, and must be at least eight (8) years old
- Participants must hold a valid ticket for the program at the correct date and time
- A parent/guardian meets a staff member on arrival at the commencement of the program, and does not leave until all paperwork has been checked and the parent briefing has concluded
- Supervision begins and ends at the time that is stated as the program time on the ticket
- Participants must be in good health, and capable of looking after their personal needs
- Participants are able to effectively communicate with staff and peers
- Participants are responsible for the care of any possessions they bring with them, including electronic devices and valuables
- Participants are responsible for taking any regular medication that they require
- A parent, guardian or responsible adult nominated on the permission form must be contactable at all times and available to pick up a child in case of emergency
- Participants bring a packed lunch, water bottle and snacks. Staff cannot supervise the purchase of food
- Participants must have appropriate clothing for outdoor time during breaks, for example hats, long sleeves, or warm clothes.

Library staff may refuse to enrol any child who does not meet these requirements, and will contact a parent/guardian to collect a child in the following circumstances:

- Dangerous, violent, or bullying behaviour towards peers, staff or other visitors
- Sickness, illness, or injury
- Any issue that compromises the safety of the children in the workshop.

4.2.4 Young people 13-18 years old attending programs

Young people 13-18 years old are free to leave the program at any time. Staff are not responsible for young people attending programs before they arrive or once they leave the program.

For booked programs, the following conditions also apply:

- Young people must be in the appropriate age range for their workshop
- Participants must hold a valid ticket for the program at the correct date and time

- Participants must have a signed permission form from a parent, guardian or responsible adult which nominates an emergency contact person who is contactable at all times and available to pick up the young person in case of emergency
- Supervision begins and ends at the time that is stated as the program time on the ticket
- Participants must be in good health, and capable of looking after their personal needs
- Participants are able to effectively communicate with staff and peers
- Participants are responsible for the care of any possessions they bring with them, including electronic devices and valuables
- Participants are responsible for taking any regular medication that they require

Library staff may refuse to enrol any young person who does not meet these requirements, and will contact a parent/guardian to collect a young person in the following circumstances:

- Dangerous, violent or bullying behaviour towards peers, staff or other visitors
- Sickness, illness or injury
- Any issue that compromises the safety of the young people in the workshop.

4.2.5 Unattended children

Children aged nine (9) years and under visiting the Library should always be attended and adequately supervised by a responsible person. If supervision by a responsible person is deemed inadequate Library staff will contact parents or guardians. City of Canada Bay Library Service staff do not supervise children in the Library, and there is a risk that unattended children may leave the Library, hurt themselves, or be approached by strangers. The Library does not have the facilities to attend to children who are sick, injured or hungry.

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)*.

Young children left alone in a library can become distressed, bored, or disruptive. Young people who disturb other Library members and visitors may be removed from the Library under Clause 17 of the *Library Regulation 2018 (NSW)*.

4.3 Child Safe principles

The Office of the Children's Guardian promotes child safe policies and practices. This policy reflects the Library's commitment to the Child Safe Standards identified by the *Royal Commission (2017)*:

1. *Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture.*
2. *Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.*
3. *Families and communities are informed and involved.*
4. *Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account.*
5. *People working with children are suitable and supported.*
6. *Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused.*
7. *Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.*
8. *Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.*
9. *Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.*
10. *Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.*

4.3.1 Children's participation and families' involvement

Families have a primary responsibility for raising their children. The Library supports the active participation of children and families in programs, activities and services we offer. We provide a range of ways to allow for feedback or raising concerns. We listen to children's and families' views, respect what they say, and involve them when we make decisions, especially about matters that will directly affect them.

4.3.2 Reporting incidents

Any person can make a report of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person under Section 24 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.

For further information, Council's *Children and Young Person Protection Policy* includes a section on reporting with internal reporting procedures - Reportable Conduct and Mandatory Reporting: Children and Young Persons Protection Policy.

4.4 Diversity & Inclusion

The Library is guided by Council's *Disability Inclusion Action Plan and Social Issues Paper*, considering children and young people's diverse circumstances and needs. It recognises the importance of training in the development of staff skills, abilities, and confidence to keep children safe.

4.5 Child Safety Risk Mitigation

The safety of children and young people while attending programs in the Library is our priority. We ensure the following in our ticketed programs where supervision is provided:

- Two (2) staff members are rostered onto the premises during program running times
- A staffing ratio of a minimum of one (1) adult for 15 children/young people
- Regular water, snack and toilet breaks
- Participants will be appropriately supervised during toilet breaks, and will be sent in pairs at all other times
- During lunch and breaks, supervision will be within a clearly defined indoor or outdoor area on Council grounds, where participants are always visible
- Program staff and contractors have valid Working with Children Checks
- First Aid kits are available and maintained according to WorkCover requirements.
- All accidents and injuries are reported in accordance with Council's Health, Safety & Wellbeing procedures.

All members and visitors to the City of Canada Bay Library Service's facilities and programs must abide by Council's *Child Safe Code of Conduct* (appendix to the *Child and Young Person Protection Policy*).

5. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
General Manager	Ensuring compliance
Director Community, Culture & Leisure	Implementation
Manager Library & Community Services	Ensure staff awareness of the policy
All Library Staff	Adhere to the policy and report any incidents

6. Laws and standards

- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
- Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)
- Library Act 1939, Library Amendment Act 1992 and Library Regulation 2018 (NSW)
- Local Government Act 1993
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Access to Information in NSW Public Libraries: Library Council of NSW Guidelines
- Australian Library and Information Association's (ALIA) statement on Public Library Services
- Library Council of New South Wales Children's Policy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries
- Library Council of New South Wales Privacy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries
- NSW Government Policy Statement and Guidelines for the Establishment and Implementation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in Public Places 2014

7. Related City of Canada Bay policies and procedures

- Children and Young Persons Protection Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Library Art Exhibition and Displays Policy
- Library Collections Policy
- Library Membership and Use Policy
- Library Public Internet, WiFi and Computer Use Policy

8. Consultation

[Describe the internal and external consultation carried out in relation to this policy / procedure, including details of any public consultation.]

Consultation with the City of Canada Bay Children's Services Manager was undertaken to ensure this policy aligned with child safe standards and child safe policies.

9. Approval status

The General Manager / Council approved this policy / procedure on [insert date].

10. Approval history

Stage	Date	Comment	ECM ID
Original Policy	19 July 2011	Approved by Council	2922760
Reviewed	July 2024	Full review – updated to comply with current legislation and changes in library services.	
Next review	July 2028		

11. Ownership and approval

Responsibility	Role
Author	Children's Librarian

Owner	Manager Library & Community Services
Endorser	City of Canada Bay Executive
Approver	Council

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