

<b>POLICY:</b>	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
<b>DATE ADOPTED:</b>	Director Cultural & Community Services Report #1 Policy 6 July 2016 Council 20 July 2016 Minute Book No. 12315
<b>LAST REVIEW:</b>	July 2021 - Adopted Council 19 August 2021
<b>FILE REFERENCE:</b>	21.00054
<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	To determine guidelines in relation to the presence of children within the Bathurst Library

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Bathurst Library is committed to serving the information and recreation needs of young people. The library strives to provide a welcoming environment and provides targeted resources and programs to meet the needs of young people.

The Bathurst Library's Children and Young People policy determines guidelines for all stakeholders, including staff and the public, in relation to the presence of children within the Bathurst Library Service. This policy applies at all Bathurst Library outlets.

### Service Statement

The Bathurst Library's collections, programs and services to young people include:

- fiction, non-fiction and recreational books
- magazines
- CDs and DVDs
- eCollections and eResources including streaming services
- internet training
- literacy programs
- homework help
- computer and internet access
- assistance from specialist and general staff in accessing collections
- space for activities and study

### Access to resources

Bathurst Library advises parents/legal guardians of young children to use their own judgement in monitoring and supervising what their child is accessing or borrowing from the library and reminds parents/legal guardians that responsibility for access to items as above remains with the parent/legal guardian.

Library materials which are not classified, or are classified "Unrestricted", "General" or "PG" (Parental Guidance) are available to all library users. Items that have a classification of "MA15+" are legally available to members who are 15 years of age and over. Items

that have a classification of “R” (Restricted Audience over 18 years) are restricted and available only to library users who are 18 years of age and over.

### **Unattended Children**

Unsupervised children can be at risk in any public place, including public libraries. Bathurst Library 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. At Bathurst Library, children 10 years of age or younger are considered “at risk” if left unattended.

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 Communities & Justice. 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 users may be removed from the library under clause 17 of the Library Regulation 2018 (NSW).

### **Internet Use**

Parents/guardians of young people are solely responsible for a young person's access to and use of library internet facilities, including access to sites, their subject matter and content. Parents/guardians must ensure that their children's use of the library's internet facilities accords with the library's internet policy.

Parents/guardians are required to give permission for internet use upon applying for library membership for a child in their care. The signed authorisation provides library staff with information regarding the parent's /guardian's wishes in relation to the use of the internet by the minor whilst in Bathurst Library.

Please refer the Bathurst Library Internet Use Policy for further information regarding conditions of internet use.

### **Children Safe Standards**

Bathurst Library supports the Child Safe Standards of the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.

The Child Safe Standards are:

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.

### **Reporting Incidents**

Under section 24 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and protection) Act 1988, any member of the community, including mandatory reporters, who suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm should report their concerns to the Child Protection Helpline. Mandatory reporters and non-mandatory reporters, including the general public, should phone the Child Protection Hotline on 132 111.

There are also reporting obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme which is operated by the Office of the Children's Guardian. The scheme monitors how organisations investigate and report on types of conduct made against their employees, volunteers or contractors who provide services to children. Bathurst Library management is committed to meet the reporting obligations within the expected timeframes as set in the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme.

### **Working with Children Checks**

Work in public libraries may be identified as 'child related employment'. In general, library staff who work face-to-face with children will need a check under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW). Staff who only have incidental contact with children will not.

### **Amendments**

Amendments to this policy in relation to operational matters may be made with the approval of the Manager Library Services.

## **RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND REFERENCES**

[NSW Library Act 1939](#)

[NSW Library Regulation 2018](#)

[Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998](#)

[Classification \(Publications, Film and Computer Games\) Act 1995.](#)

[Children's Policy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries.](#)

[NSW Office of the Children's Guardian](#)

[NSW Communities & Justice Department](#)

[NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)

[Child Protection \(Working With Children\) Act 2012 No. 51](#)