

North Western Library

Children and Young Person Policy



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Welcome

The North Western 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.

Service Statement

The North Western Library's services to young people include:

- fiction, non-fiction, and recreational books
- magazines
- computer games for in-library use (subject to observing copyright)
- 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

Parental responsibility statement

This part of the policy defines the responsibilities of parents/guardians with regard to their child's use of a public library. Topics to be covered include information on:

- access to resources.
- unattended children

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

North Western 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. North Western 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.

Unattended children

Unsupervised children can be at risk in any public place, including public libraries. North Western 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. In addition, libraries do 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 s.23 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 and may be reported as such to the Director-General of the Department of Family and 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 s.228 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

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 2010 (NSW).

Child safe standards

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People promote child-safe policies and practices by encouraging organisation to become child safe.

A child safe organisation is one that systematically; reduces the likelihood of harm occurring against a child, increases the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm and provides adequate support to a child when harm has occurred or is alleged to have occurred.

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.

We strive to recognise and abide by these principles in our policy and in our interactions with children within our facilities. All North Western Library staff have a current Working With Children Check.

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 (NSW). Some have a legal obligation to do so under section 27 of that Act in respect of children under 16 — these are known as mandatory reporters. If library staff deliver education, training or other services to children, section 27 may apply.

In the event of a complaint being made it should be reported to the Secretary, through the NSW Department of Family & Community Services. Further information is available in the NSW Interagency Guidelines which provide guidance for government and non-government agencies delivering child wellbeing and child protection services in NSW.

There are also reporting obligations under the reportable conduct scheme. Anyone may report a “reportable allegation” or a conviction the persons considers is a “reportable conviction” with respect to an employee of the library to the agency head under the Children’s Guardian Act 2019 (NSW). Employees of the library are required to make a report if they become aware of a reportable allegation or reportable conviction in relation to another employee. In this context, employee includes a volunteer engaged to provide services to children and a contractor who holds, or is required to hold, a working with children check clearance.

Reportable allegations and reportable convictions concern “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.

If the employee about which the allegation or conviction relates holds, or is required to hold, a working with children check clearance, then the allegation or conviction is reportable even if it occurred outside of the course of the person’s engagement with the library.

Mandatory reporters can make a child protection report by calling the Child Protection Hotline on **132 111**, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.

Further details on how to make a child protection report can be found here on the NSW Government Communities & Justice website:

<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/mandatory-reporters/how-to>