

Care of children in libraries policy

Last modified 14 April 2005 - Review June 2006 or as required. Approved by SLT

Children are welcomed by Christchurch City Libraries to use and enjoy its services and resources. Parents and guardians are responsible for the supervision and behaviour of their children while the children are in the Library. The Library recognises it is reasonable to expect older children (more than 10 years) to visit on their own. However, each situation involving an unattended child of any age needs to be considered on its own merits.

The Library will not take responsibility for the care and behaviour of unattended children. In the event of disruptive behaviour, children in distress or believed to be unsafe the police may be notified if their supervising adult cannot be found or contacted.

The Library's goals of being at "the heart of the community" ([Library +](#)) and supporting learning ([Learning and Literacy](#)) ensure that children's use is nurtured and encouraged. This can be best achieved if children are safe and comfortable in the Library, supervised by a parent or guardian.

Definition

Child and young person: Child means a boy or girl under the age of 14 years.

Unattended: Where a child or young person is found unaccompanied by a parent or guardian or other person who usually has the care of the child or young person in a situation in which the child's or young person's physical or mental health is being, or is likely to be, impaired, a member of the Police may, using such force as may reasonably be necessary, take the child or young person and ...deliver the child or young person into the custody of a parent or guardian...or...to a Social Worker.

'Unattended child' for Library purposes: Although the law defines a child as someone under the age of 14, it is recognised that older children (more than 10 years) are more likely than younger children to be able to discern situations in which their safety might be compromised. It is reasonable to expect older children to visit the Library on their own. However, each situation involving an unattended child of any age needs to be considered on its own merits.

'Disruptive behaviour' for Library purposes: Inappropriate behaviour that is disruptive includes that which is "harmful to the physical or emotional well being of the child or young person or to others."

- Extracted from the following Acts:
- Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989
- Children, Young Persons, and their Families Amendment Act 1994
- Education Act 1989

Regulations

1. The Library will comply with the following legislation.
 - Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989
 - Children, Young Persons, and their Families Amendment Act 1994
 - Education Act 1989
2. Action regarding an unattended child will be taken when their health and safety becomes an issue (including emotional well being) or there is disruptive behaviour that is caused by or affects either the children in question or other Library customers.