

WWCL Children's Procedure

The Wagga Wagga City Library (WWCL) is committed to providing opportunities to satisfy recreation and information needs in a safe and welcoming environment. WWCL acknowledges the importance of children as users of the library service.

WWCL is part of the NSW Public Library Network. The State Library of NSW provides consultancy and support services to NSW public libraries and administers the distribution of state government library funding to NSW Councils. The State Library of NSW Children's Policy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries forms the basis of the WWCL Children's Procedure.

Purpose

The WWCL Children's Procedure outlines WWCL standards regarding the provision of services to children and defines the responsibilities of parents/guardians and staff regarding children within the library.

Scope

Wagga Wagga City Library customers and staff.

Procedure Provisions

The WWCL provides collections, programs, and services for children.

Access to resources

Library materials which are not classified, or are classified Unrestricted, General or PG are available to all library users. Items that are classified MA 15+ are legally available to members over 15 years of age. Items that are classified R18+ are restricted and available only to library users over 18 years of age.

Parents/guardians are responsible for supervising their children's access to, and use of, library resources.

Unattended Children

Children must always be accompanied and supervised by a parent or guardian.

Library staff are not responsible for the supervision of unattended children in the library.

Parents/guardians of children left unattended in the library may be committing an offence under s.228 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

Unsupervised children within a library can cause disturbances to other users and are also at risk of harm to themselves or others.

Library users, including children, who disturb and cause offence to other library users may be removed from the library under clause 17 of the *Library Regulation 2018* (NSW). Other actions may include reporting the child's conduct to the guardian, school, or police.

Library staff will attempt to contact the parent or guardian of unattended children. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached within a reasonable amount of time or if they decline to supervise their child, library staff will contact the NSW Police to ensure the child's safety.

Internet Use

WWCL does not take responsibility for material viewed on the internet. Parents/guardians are responsible for supervising their children's access to the internet.

Child Protection

WWCL endorses the child-safe and child-friendly policies and practices of the Office of the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People:

- Child-safe means taking steps to keep children safe from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
- Child-friendly means children are valued, respected, and included so they feel confident they will be listened to.

Mandatory reporting

In NSW, mandatory reporting is regulated by the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (the Care Act). A person who is in paid work in a career in health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services, law enforcement, disability services, religious ministry, or as registered psychologists, wholly or partly delivering services to children as part of their professional work or other paid employment, is required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to Communities and Justice.

Under section 24 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, any person can report harm or risk of a child or young person aged under 16.

Library staff who participate in providing education, training, or other services to children are required by law to report incidents where they reasonably suspect, during the course of their work, that a child is at risk of harm.

Library staff are required under the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW) to make a report if they become aware of a reportable allegation or reportable conviction in relation to another employee. In this context, library staff includes volunteers engaged to provide services to children and contractors who hold, or are required to hold, a current Working with Children Check.

Reportable allegations and reportable convictions concern "reportable conduct", including a sexual offence, sexual misconduct, ill-treatment of a child, neglect of a child, an assault against a child, failing to care for a child, 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.

Each local authority is required under the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW) to have its own policies and procedures about reporting, and the investigation of reports, under the reportable conduct scheme. Libraries should have regard to their local arrangements.

Child safe principles

The Office of the Children's Guardian promotes child-safe policies and practices by encouraging organisations 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 Office of the Children's Guardian provides eResources to support libraries in identifying risks and strategies.

Legislative Context

- Library Act 1939
- Library Regulation 2018
- Related legislation: Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

Related Documents

- [WWCC Child Safe Procedure: Recruitment, Employee Conduct and Training](#)
- [WWCC Child Safe Procedure: Identifying, Reporting and Investigating Concerns](#)
- [NSW Children's Procedure Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries.](#)
- eSafety is a Federal Government initiative administered by the [Australian Government Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner.](#)

References

Commonwealth Government Legislation, Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995

New South Wales Advocate for Children and Young People

New South Wales Government Legislation, Library Act 1939

New South Wales Government Legislation, Library Regulation 2018

New South Wales Government Legislation, Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

New South Wales Government Legislation, Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

New South Wales Government Legislation, Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)

New South Wales Government Legislation, Local Government Act 1993

State Library of NSW, Legislation and Policies

Library Council of NSW, Children's Procedure Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries

Office of the Children's Guardian Working with Children Check

NSW Communities and Justice ChildStory Reporter

Definitions

Term	Definition
Minor	In NSW, a person under the age of 18.
Mandatory Reporter	A person who in their paid work is obliged by law to report specific forms of child abuse or neglect to Communities and Justice where that person reasonably suspects that abuse has occurred. Mandatory reporting requirements vary across Australia.
WWCL branches	Site at Civic Centre and two Agile Vans.

