



**Policy Subject/Title:** Young People in the Library Policy

**Policy Number:** C/024

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**Responsible Officer:** Regional Librarian

**Legislative or Regulatory Reference:** *Libraries Act 1988*  
Queensland Criminal Code - 1899  
Local Government Controlled Areas,  
Facilities and Roads: Local Law 4

**Related Policies / Procedures:** Public Internet Use Policy  
Library Membership Policy  
Unattended Children in the Library Procedure

**Authorised by:** Somerset Regional Council

**Authorised on:** 27 March 2013 (Doc Id 667004)

**Review / Amendment dates:** 11 July 2013 (Doc Id 711676 / no amendment)

## **1. OBJECTIVE**

To define the conditions relating to the supervision and behaviour of children and youth in Somerset Regional Libraries.

## **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Children and Young Peoples policy is to:

- to ensure the safety and welfare of all library patrons
- define Somerset Libraries expectations of parents, carers and educators
- inform parents, carers and educators about matters relevant to the care of children and young people in Somerset Libraries.
- to ensure that the library operates efficiently and effectively as a workplace.

## **3. SCOPE**

This policy applies to children, youth and their parents/ guardians.

## **4. POLICY**

### **A. Introduction**

Children are an integral part of any community and are welcomed by Somerset Libraries.

Somerset Regional Library Service aims to provide a quality lending, outreach and programming service to all clients, particularly children of all ages.

Library staff will always demonstrate due care for young people in the library, however they are unable to act as child carers and must not be put in the position of acting as parent or guardian. Library staff have no authority to ensure that young people remain within the library if left unattended and cannot be responsible for any incidents that occur outside the library.

### **B. Conditions**

1. Children and youth using the library service must be attended and adequately supervised by a parent or guardian. This includes children attending special library activities.
2. At all times, responsibility for the welfare and behaviour of children and youth using the library service rests with their parent or guardian.
3. In the event children or youth are left unattended at closing time, library staff will attempt to contact their parents or guardians before contacting the police.
4. Parents and guardians must be aware that the library is both a public place and a work area. There may be times when the library may close unexpectedly due to power cuts, emergencies, or operational needs.
5. Library staff reserve the right to request proper conduct and to determine

inappropriate behaviour which may offend, injure or disturb other library users, staff, facilities or items.

### **C. General information**

Libraries are busy public places, open to all, and staff cannot judge which members of the public present a possible danger to children and youth.

Children left alone in the library can become distressed, bored or disruptive. Library users, including young people, who disturb other library users may be removed from the library.

Somerset Regional Library service does not censor its collections. Internet content and activity on the internet is similarly not censored or screened by use of filtering software or by any other means. Somerset Library staff are available to help children and young people and their parents/ guardians effectively navigate collections and the internet.

Parents who leave a child/ youth unattended in the library may be exposing their child/ youth to potential harm.

### **D. Determination of unattended**

For the purpose of this policy:

‘unattended’ and ‘unsupervised’ mean not within sight of a parent or guardian.

Somerset Regional Libraries do not specify a minimum age at which a child / youth may be left unattended in a public place and is concerned with individual circumstances rather than age.

Library staff are to consider children / youth to be at risk when they have been left unattended at the library for periods of time deemed by the staff member responsible for the library at that time, to be unacceptably long for a person of that age.

A sincere determination is all that is required under legislation – (*Criminal Code Act 1899 – Sec 364A*).

### **E. Non-compliance**

Where children and youth are found to be unattended or behaving contrary to this policy, Library staff will endeavour to arrange for a parent or guardian responsible for the child to collect the child.

If such an arrangement cannot be made the child will be considered at risk and either the Queensland Police Service or Department of Child Safety will be notified.

## **6. EFFECTIVE FROM**

This policy is effective from 27 March 2013.

## **7. CONTROLS**

*Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 (Qld)*

**8. DATE OF RESOLUTION**

This policy was approved by the Chief Executive Office and adopted by the Somerset Regional Council at the Ordinary Meeting of 27 March 2013.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Bai', is positioned above the 'Signed:' label.

Signed:

Date: 27 March 2013