




Mildura Rural City Council

Library Service – Unattended Children Policy

Policy – Branch Specific OP018

Prepared	Reviewed	Approved	Date
Library Services Coordinator	Manager Leisure & Cultural Services	General Manager	
Trim File: 18/02/01		To be reviewed: June 2027	
Document Owner: Manager Leisure & Cultural Services		Review Frequency: Every 5 Years	
CEO Signature: 			2 June 2022

1. The purpose of this policy is

The purpose of this policy is to outline Mildura Rural City Council's responsibilities in regard to young children left unsupervised in library facilities.

To provide direction for library staff if a child aged 12 years and under is left unattended in the library; and to inform parents/guardians of their responsibilities regarding the supervision of children in the library.

2. Policy Statement

This policy applies to all Mildura Rural City Council library buildings and service points, including the Rural Outreach Service.

3. Principles

Mildura Rural City Council welcomes children to its libraries and strives to provide an environment to meet their educational and recreational needs.

The library is a public building with staff trained to provide public library services. The library is not responsible for the provision of long or short term supervision of unattended children. Mildura Rural City Council is not responsible for the welfare of children left by parents/guardians in the library.

For the safety and comfort of children, a responsible parent or guardian must accompany children while they are using the library. While in the library, parents and guardians are responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behaviour of their children. An older sibling must be over 16 years of age to be acceptable as a guardian for a younger sibling.

A child under 18 years of age can become a member of the library with the consent of their parent or legal guardian. It is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to keep personal information, including telephone numbers and addresses, up to date. The parent or legal guardian will be contacted in the case of an unaccompanied child being left in the library, a child causing concern, or at closing time of the library.

Library Service staff members will enforce this policy in situations where an unattended child:

- is found frightened or crying in the library
- is perceived to be endangering themselves; or that another person in the library poses a perceived threat to an unattended child
- exhibits inappropriate behaviour
- has not been met by a parent or guardian at closing time
- is found unaccompanied in the library.

If contact can be made with the responsible parent or guardian, they will be told that the child must be picked up within thirty minutes or an agreed time. Failing that or after hours the Library Service will contact the Police.

Two staff members, if possible, must remain with the child on the library premises until the nominated parent/guardian or if necessary, the appropriate authorities arrive.

Contact Information

Victoria Police: 000 or 131 444

Medical Emergency

In the case of medical emergency, staff must call 000 immediately and then attempt to contact the parents/legal guardian, in that order.

An incident report will be completed by Library staff in all situations.

Unattended children in the event of an emergency building evacuation

In the event of an emergency incident in the library, staff could be required to evacuate the library building.

Staff assist in ensuring that the library is evacuated by all library users. If during this process staff identify unattended children, the staff member must inform and assist, in their safe evacuation to the designated assembly point. However, if this is not possible or the child is not cooperating in the evacuation, staff will need to make an on the spot assessment of the situation in terms of duty of care.

If evacuated, a staff member will be nominated to care for the unattended child while evacuation is in progress. When it is safe to do so staff must follow policy directions.

4. Who is responsible for implementing this policy?

The Library Service Coordinator and all Library Staff are responsible for implementation of this policy.

5. Definitions

Parent / Guardian The legal guardian of the child or a responsible person over the age of 16 who has delegated responsibility for the child by their parent or legal guardian.

An older sibling must be over 16 years of age to be acceptable as a caregiver for a younger sibling.

Unattended Child A child of the age of 12 years and under, unaccompanied by a parent / caregiver.

Duty of Care A duty to take reasonable care of a person.

6. Legislation and other references

6.1 Legislation

For further information related to this policy see:

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Regulations 2017 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Information Privacy Act 2000

6.2 Risk Assessment Reference

Please tick the corporate risk(s) that this policy is addressing.

Risk Category	✓	Risk Category	✓
Asset Management		Financial Sustainability	
Committees		Human Resource Management	
Compliance – Legal & Regulatory		Leadership & Organisational Culture	
Contract Management		Occupational Health & Safety	✓
Contract Tendering & Procurement		Organisational Risk Management	✓
Corporate Governance		Project Management	
Environmental Sustainability		Public Image and Reputation	✓