

### 1 Policy History

Revision No.	Issue Date	WRL Committee Adoption Date
1	29/10/2020	29/10/2020
2		
<b>Revision Schedule</b>	To be revised every four (4) years.	
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Regional Library Manager, Western Riverina Libraries	

### 2 Policy Objective

Western Riverina Libraries (WRL) is committed to serving the information and recreation needs of children and young people. The Library strives to provide a safe and welcoming environment, and provides targeted resources and programs to meet the needs of children and young people.

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the principles guiding the Library's provision of services to children and young people, and to outline the duty of care responsibilities of the Library, parents and guardians towards children and young people.

This policy applies to all visitors to WRL branch libraries.

### 3 Policy Statement

#### 3.1 Library services for children and young people

Children and young people in the Library have access to:

- A wide range of free resources, services, and programs developed to support their information, literacy, education, and recreational needs;
- A Library environment that supports their physical and developmental needs, including dedicated areas for children and young people, and spaces to study;
- Trained and knowledgeable staff committed to delivering safe and inclusive Library services to children and young people; and,
- Welcoming, respectful, and supportive service for all ages.

#### 3.2 Access to resources for children and young people

- Materials for children and young people are intended to stimulate their interests and broaden their views, promote education and literacy, and support reading for enjoyment.

- The reading and viewing activity of children and young people is ultimately the responsibility of parents and guardians, who guide and oversee their own child's development.

### 3.2.1 Collection material

- The Library collects resources in a range of formats for children and young people, as detailed in the Library's *Collection Development Policy*.
- Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child's selection and use of Library materials accords with any restrictions the family may wish to set. WRL encourages parents and guardians to consult with their child to develop clear rules regarding access to resources that accord with the family's personal values and beliefs.
- The Library does not restrict access to Library material unless legally required under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995 (Cth)*.
- Library materials which are not classified, or are classified *Unrestricted*, *General (G)*, *Parental Guidance (PG)*, or *Mature (M)* are available to all Library users.
- Items that have a classification of *Mature Accompanied (MA 15+)* are restricted to borrowing by members who are over the age of 15 years. Items that have a classification of *Restricted (R 18+)* are restricted to borrowing by members over the age of 18 years.

### 3.2.2 Internet access

- Parents and guardians of children and young people are solely responsible for their child's access to and use of the Library's internet facilities, including access to sites, their subject matter and content.
- Parents and guardians must ensure that their child's use of the Library's Internet facilities accords with the Library's *Computer and Internet Use Policy*.
- The Library promotes and supports children and young people's access to information, including digital information through its internet facilities.
- Library staff are available to assist children and young people in the use of the Internet, and to recommend websites on particular subjects. A number of appropriate websites have been selected for inclusion in the Library's digital collections on the Library website – [www.wrl.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wrl.nsw.gov.au).

## 3.3 Supervision and safety of children and young people

### 3.3.1 Child Safe Standards

- WRL upholds and promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in our community.

- WRL supports the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian *Child Safe Standards*:
  - Standard 1 Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
  - Standard 2 Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
  - Standard 3 Families and communities are informed and involved.
  - Standard 4 Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account.
  - Standard 5 People working with children are suitable and supported.
  - Standard 6 Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused.
  - Standard 7 Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
  - Standard 8 Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.
  - Standard 9 Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
  - Standard 10 Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

### 3.3.2 Unsupervised children

- Parents and guardians are responsible for the supervision of their child’s use of the Library, in line with this policy and the Library’s *Visitor Code of Conduct Policy*.
- Unsupervised children and young people can be at risk in any public place, including public libraries. Library staff do not supervise children and young people in the Library, and there is a risk that unattended children and young people may leave the Library at any time, hurt themselves, or be approached by strangers. Libraries do not have the facilities or appropriate licences to attend to children and young people who are sick, injured, or hungry.
- Children and young people left unattended in the Library may be classed as a child or young person at risk of harm under section 23 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW) and may be reported as such to the NSW Police. Parents who leave their child unattended in a public library are exposing their child to potential harm, and may be committing an offence under section 228 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW).
- Children and young people 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 2018* (NSW).
- Parents and guardians are advised of the following procedure in relation to unsupervised children and young people in the Library:
  - Library staff will attempt to contact a parent or guardian

- If a parent or guardian cannot be reached or does not resume supervision of their child within a reasonable timeframe, Library staff will contact NSW Police to ensure the child's safety.

### 3.3.3 Child protection

- If Library staff suspect that a child or young person is at risk of harm, or have concerns about a particular person's presence or conduct towards children or young people in the Library, Library staff will contact NSW Police to report these concerns and seek assistance as necessary.

### 3.3.4 Child related employment and Working with Children Checks

- WRL classifies work in its libraries as child related employment.
- Under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW), Library staff must have a current Working with Children Check clearance.

### 3.4 Responsibility for implementation of this policy

- Western Riverina Libraries Committee is responsible for review and adoption of this policy.
- Library Managers and supervisors are responsible for managing processes relevant to this policy and communicating this policy to staff.
- Library staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy.

### 3.5 Feedback

WRL welcomes your feedback on this Policy. Feedback should be directed to:

Regional Library Manager, Western Riverina Libraries

**Mail** PO Box 807, Griffith NSW 2680

**Email** [library@griffith.nsw.gov.au](mailto:library@griffith.nsw.gov.au)

## 4 Definitions

**Children** Aged 0-11

**Young people** Aged 12-15

**Western Riverina Libraries branch libraries** include:

- Carrathool Shire Library
- Narrandera Shire Library
- Carrathool and Narrandera Mobile Library
- Griffith City Library
- Griffith and Murrumbidgee Mobile Library
- Hay Shire Library
- Jerilderie Library

## 5 Legislation

Related key legislation:

- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW)
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW)
- *Children’s Guardian Act 2019* (NSW)
- *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* (Cth)
- *Library Act 1939* (NSW)
- *Library Regulation 2018* (NSW)
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth)

## 6 Related Documents

### 6.1 Policy development

The following resources informed the development of this document:

- *Children’s policy guidelines for NSW public libraries V4.0*. Library Council of NSW. 2018
- *Children’s policy*. Riverina Regional Library. 2018.
- *A Guide to the Child Safe Standards*. NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian. 2020.
- *Young people in the library*. ACT Government Libraries. Undated.

### 6.2 Related WRL Policies

- *Collection Development Policy*
- *Computer and Internet Use Policy*
- *Membership Policy*
- *Visitor Code of Conduct Policy*