

Guidelines for the supervision of children (0-12 years old) in the Library

The term 'children' is understood to refer to children aged from birth to twelve years inclusive.

City of Swan Libraries welcome children to our libraries and we strive to provide an environment which meets their educational, informational and recreational needs.

The libraries however, are public buildings with staff trained to provide public library services. It is not the role of libraries to provide long or short term child care.

A parent/guardian, caregiver or responsible adult over 18 years of age must supervise children whilst in the library and they are responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behaviour of their children.

Supervision requires that the responsible person must be within sight of their child at all times.

Library staff do not take over parental responsibilities when children and young people enter the library.

Parents who leave a child unattended whilst on library premises may be exposing their child to potential harm, and may themselves be committing an offence under the Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA).

Library staff members will respond to situations, such as:

- An unattended child is found frightened or crying in the library;
- An unattended child is hurt or sick;
- An unattended child is perceived to be endangering him or herself, and/or other library users;
- Another person in the library is perceived to pose a threat to the unattended child;
- An unattended child exhibits inappropriate behaviour;
- An unattended child is found in the library at closing time;
- An unattended child is found in the library in the event of an emergency evacuation.

In the first instance, staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian or caregiver within the library, then if unsuccessful, to attempt to contact the parent/guardian or caregiver by other means including checking information on the database, if applicable. If after 15 minutes no contact has been made staff will request, at the Manager's discretion, the Police to collect the child. Staff will wait with the child until Police arrive.

If an unattended child is found in the library at closing time staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian or caregiver as above. If no contact has been made within 10 minutes, staff will then request the Police to collect the child. Staff will wait with the child until Police arrive.