



## 2403 - DEALING WITH UNATTENDED CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY

### 1. Intent of Policy

Oberon Council Library is committed to serving the information and recreation needs of young people. The Library strives to provide a welcoming environment and provides targeted resources and programs to meet the needs of young people.

### 2. Objectives

Oberon Council Library's services to young people include:

- Fiction, non-fiction and recreational books
- Magazines
- CDs
- Computer and internet access
- Assistance from specialist and general staff in accessing collections and information
- eBooks and e-Resources
- DVDs
- Internet guidance
- Storytime
- Space for activities or study

### 3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all users with specific reference to young people using the Oberon Council Library and to Council staff.

### 4. Principles

#### 4.1 Unattended Children

Young people under 10 years old must be accompanied and supervised by an adult at all times. Unsupervised children can be at risk in any public place, including public libraries. The staff at Oberon Council Library do not supervise children in the Library and there is a risk that unattended children may leave the Library at any time, hurt themselves, or be approached by strangers. In addition, the Libraries do not have the facilities to attend to children who are sick, injured or hungry.

Children left unattended in a Public Library may be classed as a child or young person at risk or harm under s.23 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)* and may be reported as such to the Director-General of the Department of Family & Community Services. Parents who leave a child unattended in a Public Library may be exposing their child to potential harm, and may be committing an offence under s.228 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*.



Young people left alone in the 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 2010 (NSW)*.

#### **4.2 Communication**

Council will ensure that Library users are informed of this Policy through displaying the Policy at the Oberon Library, placing it on Council's website and approved social media and in accordance with other communication methods as outlined in the adopted Communication Engagement Strategy.

### **5. Library Staff Responsibilities**

All Library staff are responsible for the implementation of this Policy.

Library staff on duty at the time a child is left unattended have the responsibility for contacting parents/carers, ambulance and/or police, where necessary. They are also required to report the event to Council's Workplace Health & Safety Coordinator Manager within 24 hours, by completing the appropriate incident form.

### **6. Complaints**

Complaints about the implementation of this Policy will be dealt with initially by the Community Services Coordinator. Complaints that cannot be resolved at this level will be referred to the Finance & Community Services Director.

If the customer remains unsatisfied they may write to:

The General Manager  
Oberon Council  
PO Box 84  
OBERON NSW 2787

Approving Authority	Oberon Council
Contact	Finance & Community Services Director
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