

Unattended children in the library

All children under 10 years of age who use the library must be supervised by a parent/caregiver of at least 16 years of age.

Libraries offer a range of services which support the information, literacy, education and recreational needs of children. Programmes held for 0-5 year olds are planned as an interactive opportunity and therefore, the presence of a parent/carer is considered compulsory.

Activity sessions for children aged 5-10 years, which are supervised by Library Staff, do not require parent attendance. However, whilst using the library resources, children under 10 years of age should always be in the line of sight of a parent or carer. Libraries are not a substitute for child care agencies, and any parent/carer who uses libraries as such is putting their child at risk. Libraries do not have the facilities or appropriate licences to attend to children who are left unsupervised, such as after school or during school holidays.

Unsupervised children can be at risk in any public place, including public libraries. There is a likelihood that unattended children will leave the library at any time, hurt themselves, or be approached by strangers. Libraries are busy public places, open to all. Libraries do not have the facilities to attend to children who are sick, injured, hungry or require access to a telephone.

Young children left alone in a library can become distressed, bored or disruptive. In circumstances where a child is repeatedly left unattended, or is not collected by closing time, parents/carers will be contacted and informed of library policy. If, after a reasonable number of attempts, the parents/carers cannot be contacted, the situation will be reported to the Local Police and if the parents/carers still cannot be contacted by the Police then the Police will notify the NSW Department of Community Services (DOCS).

If the parents/carers are contacted and then choose to ignore the Library Unattended Children's Policy thus ensuing further incidences then the Library Manager shall take further action and notify the Manager Community Services who will notify the NSW Department of Community Services (DOCS). Staff will not be made responsible for the transport of children left unattended in the Library.

Policy Reviewed February 2017

Camden Council Library Service