

Guidelines title	RTRL Young People in the Library Guidelines
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Objective	To outline the responsibilities of parents, guardians and carers, and the role of Library staff, when children and young people are in the Library.
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Introduction

Richmond Tweed Regional Library (RTRL) is committed to serving the information and recreation needs of young people. The RTRL strives to provide a welcoming and safe environment and provides targeted resources and programs to meet the needs of young people. The RTRL does not offer services provided professionally by other agencies including childcare and formal education.

Objectives

These Guidelines outline the responsibilities of parents, guardians and carers with regard to their child's use of the RTRL Libraries. It also details the responsibilities of RTRL staff if and when unattended young people and children are deemed to be at risk in the RTRL Library. This document is framed with reference to the [Library Act 1939](#) and the [Library Regulation 2018](#) and should be looked at in conjunction with Lismore City Council's Child Safe Policy.

Scope

These Guidelines apply at all RTRL branch Libraries and support areas.

RTRL branch Libraries include: Lismore, Goonellabah, Ballina, Alstonville, Lennox Head, Byron Bay, Mullumbimby, Brunswick Heads, Tweed Heads, Murwillumbah, Kingscliff, Research and Family History Centre, and RTRL Mobile Library.

Related key legislation and Policy

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all applicable legislation, regulations or Policy.

[Library Act 1939](#)

[Library Regulations 2018](#)

[Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#)

[Classification \(Publications, Films and Computer Games\) Act 1995](#)

[Children's Policy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries](#)

[RTRL Member and Visitor Code of Conduct](#)

[RTRL Exclusions and Directions to Leave Policy](#)

[RTRL Access to Information Policy](#)

[Child Safe Policy](#)

Responsibilities

The RTRL is managed by Lismore City Council as Executive Council and is responsible for leading the implementation of these Guidelines, including its conformity to legislative and other compliance requirements, communicating these Guidelines to managers and supervisors, and other relevant activities in implementing the Guidelines.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for managing processes relevant to these Guidelines and communicating these Guidelines to staff.

Staff are responsible for understanding and complying with these Guidelines.

RTRL members and visitors to the library are responsible for abiding by the intent of these Guidelines.

Review requirements

These Guidelines will be reviewed annually, with a full review undertaken every four years in line with Local Government procedures.

Guidelines approval

Guidelines approval will be undertaken through the RTRL Committee.

Guidelines

RTRL is committed to serving the information and recreation needs of young people. In line with the RTRL Member and Visitor Code of Conduct and RTRL Exclusions and Directions to Leave Policy, RTRL strives to provide a welcoming, safe and inclusive

environment, with targeted resources and programs that support learning, growth and enjoyment for young people.

RTRL aims to ensure its Libraries are safe environments from a work health and safety (WHS) perspective, however responsibility for a child's safe use and enjoyment of the RTRL always lies with parents, guardians, and carers. Neither RTRL nor Constituent Councils can take responsibility for children in any library. Libraries are not licensed child-minding facilities and cannot provide supervision of children.

Parents, guardians and carers are responsible for guiding their child's use of RTRL resources and facilities. RTRL does not censor its collections but instead supports and promotes broad access to information, including electronic information through its internet facilities. Parents, guardians and carers are best placed to set family expectations and to assist their child in choosing suitable resources.

RTRL staff are available to assist with internet use and to recommend appropriate websites. Parents, guardians and carers are responsible for overseeing their child's internet use, in line with RTRL's Access to Information Policy.

In line with the [Classification \(Publications, Films and Computer Games\) Act 1995](#), RTRL provides open access to publications classified as 'Unrestricted.' Access to films is provided in accordance with classification guidelines: members and visitors under the age of 18 are not permitted to access films rated 'R,' and members and visitors under the age of 15 may only access films rated 'MA' with the consent of a parent, guardian or carer.

Unattended children

Children under 12 years of age must not be left unsupervised in the RTRL Library. Unsupervised children and young people can be at risk in any public place, including public libraries. RTRL staff do not supervise children in the library at any time. There is a risk that unsupervised children may leave the RTRL library at any time, may hurt themselves, may become distressed, disruptive, or may be approached by strangers.

Parents/guardians/carers must remain within the RTRL library building for the length of the child's visit and are responsible for the behaviour and the safety of their children who use the RTRL library. RTRL staff may question an unattended child to establish the reason they are attending the RTRL Library or length of their visit.

Procedure

1. RTRL staff will identify an unattended child when:

- a child is under the age of 12 and has been left unsupervised
- a child is found to be unsupervised during an emergency building evacuation
- a child is found distressed in the RTRL library
- a child is perceived to be endangering themselves or someone else
- a child exhibits behaviour that breaches the Member and Visitor Code of Conduct
- a child has not been met by a parent/guardian/carer at closing time.

2. RTRL staff will seek the parent/guardian/carer of the unattended child in the RTRL library.
3. RTRL staff will contact the Supervisor &/or WHS Advisor to report the situation.
4. If the parent/guardian/carer of an unattended child is not located in the RTRL library, then:
 - RTRL staff will contact the parent/guardian/carer by phone and ask them to attend the RTRL library within an agreed timeframe.
 - RTRL staff will give a copy of these Guidelines to the parent/guardian/carer upon arrival.
5. Where possible, two RTRL staff members should remain with the child until the police/parent/guardian/carer arrive.
6. RTRL staff will call NSW Police to attend the RTRL library if a parent/guardian/carer is unable to be located or contacted within a reasonable timeframe.
7. RTRL staff will complete an incident form detailing the child involved, the responsible parent/guardian/carer, the Police Officer attending (if applicable), and the time spent by RTRL staff if occurring after closing time.

Reporting

There may be occasions where an RTRL staff member is concerned for the welfare and wellbeing of an unattended child who is aged between 12 to 18. RTRL staff may seek out the child's parent/guardian/carer if there are behavioural concerns or risks associated with the lack of supervision.

Parents, guardians and carers who leave a child unattended in a public library may risk exposing their child to potential harm.

The [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#), details specific content about the care and protection of children and young people, including reports that may be made.

Document history and version control

Version #	Date approved	Approved by	Description	CM ref #
1.1	17/09/2025	RTRL Council	Complete review of all RTRL Policies has resulted in revised numbering & documents.	ED2025/ 070036