

Oxfordshire County Council

Children & Young People in Library Premises Policy

A Children and young people in library premises

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A) Children and Young People in Library Service premises

Public library staff or volunteers are not in *loco parentis* (i.e. they do not take the responsibility of a parent/carer).

Legislative framework

This is laid out at the end of this Policy.

The essential principles in the Children Act 1989 inform the direction of this Policy, that the welfare of the child is paramount.

1. Babies and Children of Preschool age

Children you have not yet made the transition to Primary School especially during the summer holidays are still regarded as of Preschool age.

- a) No baby or young child of Preschool age (including home-educated children) should be left alone in any library service premises.
- b) A parent, carer or teacher must **closely** supervise and **closely** accompany them at all times.
- c) Staff and volunteers should never accept responsibility for a child handed over by a parent or carer

If a baby or young child of Preschool age is left in the care of a person under 16 years old, such as a sibling, the library expects the older child(ren) to act in loco parentis and the parent remains legally responsible for the child's safety.

2. Young Children of Primary School age

- a) Young children who attend Primary School or, in the case of home-educated young children, are primary school age are able to use the library as long as their parents/carers/teachers are present and able to supervise them.
- b) Parents of young children of Primary School age who attend regular events and clubs such as book clubs, Code Clubs, Raspberry Jams, creative writing, are expected to be mindful of their child's safety. It is strongly recommended that parents are either present or supervising their child's library experience.

By agreement with the leader of the session, it may be acceptable for a parent to leave a child in the care of a closed group as long as a contact number for them is left with the group leader in case of emergencies.

Young children are considered to be of Primary School age in the summer holidays before they transition to secondary school.

- c) Young children who attend Primary School or are of Primary School age are expected to comply with the Library Acceptable Use Policy under guidance from their parents/carers/teachers who will be supervising them.
- d) Library Managers will challenge children in this category who do not behave in the manner expected of them and involve the young child's parents/carers/teachers.
- e) The Library Service expects children in this category to be able to reach their parent/carer/teacher at any point during their attendance in the library.
- f) Library staff and volunteers will take reasonable steps but not take parental responsibility to ensure young children in this category are with their parents/carers/teachers in the event of an evacuation or sudden closure of the library immediate safe evacuation of the library.

Staff or volunteers will never accept responsibility for a child handed over by a parent/carer/teacher.

3. Young People of Secondary School age

- a) Young People who attend Secondary School or, in the case of home-educated young people, are of Secondary School age old are able to use the library independently.
- b) Young People in this category are expected to comply with the Library Acceptable Use Policy which prescribes certain standards of behaviour by them during their visit to the library.
- c) Library Managers will challenge young people in this category who do not behave in the manner expected of them and involve their parents/ carers if necessary. Young people of this age are expected to be in control of their own behaviour.

- d) Library Managers will contact local schools, police and other services where repetitive bad behaviour is ongoing and vexatious in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy.
- e) The Library Service expects young people to be able to contact their parent/carer or get to a safe space by themselves if the library is evacuated or closed at any point.
- f) Library staff and volunteers will take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of lone young people in the case of a building evacuation or early library closure as they would for all library customers. Young people may be steered towards a muster point along with library staff to ensure they, or library staff/volunteers, can contact parents/carers to advise on further guidance from the parent/carer.
- g) Parents of lone young people can expect library staff or volunteers to contact emergency services in case of serious incidents or accidents.
- h) Young people in this category are deemed responsible enough to give their own permission, or not, for photos/film of themselves at library events to be used in library social media and promotions. This also includes events with partners.

4. Parents responsibilities

- a) Babies and young children of Preschool age should never be left alone in the library and be **closely** supervised at all times.
- b) Children of Primary School age should be **supervised** by their parents/carers and be present and within easy reach.
- c) Young People of Secondary School age are able to use the library independently and are expected to comply with the Acceptable Use Policy.

5. What staff/volunteers will do if a child/young person is left unattended

- a) Babies and young children of Preschool age
AND
children of Primary School age
Babies and young children of Preschool age should **never** be left unattended on library premises. Children of Primary School age should have parents present and within easy reach (unless attending a closed event 2b)

Staff/volunteers will:

- Try to locate their parent or carer and remind them of their parental responsibilities for the baby/child while in the library
- Keep the baby/child under supervision or in a safe and calming place in the library while the search for the parent is undertaken

- Contact the social services team or the police if
 - The parent/carer cannot be found
 - The child exhibits signs of nervousness
 - The child appears confused or frightened
 - The child cannot tell you readily where he or she lives

Try to reassure the child

- Log this as an Incident using the online reporting method and note in the Day Book if it used.
Volunteers should contact the area manager on duty / Support Library for guidance.
Note the time the child was left and collected.
All incidents should be referred to the Library Manager or duty Group Library Manager at the earliest opportunity.

b) Young people of Secondary School age

- Young people of Secondary School age are able to use the library independently.
- It will be assumed that the young person can either contact their parents/carer or get to a safe space by themselves if the building is evacuated / closed unexpectedly or any other incident.
- It should be assumed that a young person can give contact details of a parent/carer in cases of medical or social emergencies. However,

Staff may contact the social services team or the police if

- The young person exhibits signs of nervousness
- The young person appears confused or frightened
- The young person appears not to be in control of their mind or body

5. Repeated Incidents of non-compliance of this Policy

The Library Manager / Group Library Manager will decide if further action is required.

a) Babies and Young Children of Preschool age

Where a parent or carer continues to leave a young child in this category unattended

- The Library Manager will make contact with the parents/carers and discuss the problem and concern
- The Library Manager will present the parent/carer with this Policy
- Parents will be informed that a repeat incidence will mean the child is treated as abandoned and social services and the police will be called and notified

- b) Young Children of Primary School age
Children of this age are able to use the library as long as their parent/carer is present and supervising them.
- If, following an unexpected incident, library closure or emergency, a child cannot reach or find a parent or get to a safe space, the Library Manager will meet with the parent and discuss their concerns referring to this policy
 - To avoid ongoing misunderstandings, parents are encouraged to meet the Library Manager and discuss their child's use of the library
- c) Young People of Secondary School age
Young people of this age are able to attend the library independently and comply with the Acceptable Use Policy and will be treated in accordance with that Policy.

6. What to do in an emergency or at closing time when babies, children and young people are found unattended

- a) Babies and Young Children of Preschool age
- If a baby or young child in this category is left unsupervised just before closing time library staff and volunteers will make every effort to locate the parent or carer
 - Staff and volunteers will contact the police or social services if the parent or carer cannot be located
- b) Young Children of Primary School age
If a young child in this category cannot reach or find a parent/carer or give contact details for them library staff or volunteers will contact social services or the police whilst keeping the child calm and occupied.
- Young children attending a closed event eg Code Club, creative writing should have a parent present and within easy reach OR will have left a contact number with the group leader
- c) Young People of Secondary School age
It will be assumed that a young person of this age can contact a parent/carer or make their way to a safe place by themselves

If they cannot or they show any signs of nervousness or anxiety, library staff or volunteers will contact social services or the police.

B) Online safety for children using library computers

1. General internet use

Guidance for parents/carers/teachers:

- Understand the online world and potential risks to your children
- Be aware of the risks to your children who use social media.
- Read the library ICT Acceptable Use Policy which parents/carers children and young people agree to accessing the internet in the library
- Library computers in designated children's areas are filtered to exclude content unsuitable for under 16s
- All libraries display posters in the children's areas / libraries which advise children and young people on staying safe online

2. Websites

The following websites give a lot of advice and information regarding children's and young people's safety whilst online.

<https://www.getsafeonline.org/safeguarding-children/>

This is a UK government security service to help protect computers and other devices from malicious attacks. Also gives advice to parents, teachers and other adults responsible for children's safety.

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/>

with links to NSPCC Keeping Children safe Online particularly related to impact of social media on children and young people
links to <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> for age related advice

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Teamed up with O2 to help parents keep children safe when they're using the internet, social networks, apps, games and more.

C Legislative Framework

1. Chartered Institute of Information & Library Professionals (CILIP)
A Safe Place for Children (2015 Youth Libraries Group Guidelines)
2. Children Act, 1989
3. The Occupier's Liability Act 1957

Last reviewed: March 2019