

BUSSELTON LIBRARIES

GUIDELINES FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Busselton Libraries welcomes children of all ages to use its facilities and services. Busselton Libraries has a duty of care to all library users and therefore, restrictions on unaccompanied minors are necessary to ensure their safety, comfort and wellbeing and that no one is placed in a situation where they are at risk of harm.

GUIDELINES

Children are welcome to use the library under the following conditions:

1. Children aged under 10 years of age must be supervised by a parent or guardian at all times. Supervision is defined as the child being within sight of the parent/guardian at all times.
2. Children aged between 10 and 12 years of age may use the library on their own, but only at the discretion and judgement of a senior staff member regarding risk/vulnerability of the child, as it is recognised that children of this age develop and mature at different rates. However, children between 10 -12 years of age should not be left unattended for extended periods of time and they should always have contact details of parent/guardian with them. They must maintain acceptable library behaviour at all times.
3. Children aged over 12 years may use the library without being supervised provided they maintain acceptable library behaviour at all times.

DEFINITIONS

Unaccompanied Child	A person who is under the age of 12 years and not in the apparent care of a responsible person. (as per ALIA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries – Services for Young People)
Parent/Carer	The legal guardian of the child or a responsible person over the age of 16 years who has been delegated responsibility for the child by its parent or legal guardian
Authorised Staff Member	Any person officially employed by City of Busselton to work for Busselton Libraries.

STAFF PROCEDURES

1. If a child under 10 years of age is left unattended, staff will try and identify and locate a parent or responsible caregiver. This may also apply to any child aged between 10 and 12 years of age, subject to discretion of senior staff member present, if the child is deemed vulnerable or at risk.
2. Staff may use library records to identify addresses and phone numbers of parents/guardians in the event a parent is not in the library.
3. Once the parent/guardian is located, the person should be informed and provided with a copy of the *Busselton Libraries' Guidelines for Unaccompanied Children*. If the parent/guardian is off site they will be asked to come to the library to collect their child.
4. If the parent has not been located within a reasonable amount of time or if the library is closing, the police shall be notified and at least two staff members shall remain with the child until they arrive. Staff will not under any circumstances drive the child to any other location.