

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Library and Resident Contact (L&RC)

Child Safety

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1. TITLE

Child Safety

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Child Safety in the Library and Resident Contact Service:

Children are a valued group of customers and it is important that that they feel secure, comfortable and confident when using Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead libraries and that we provide safe community spaces.

3. PURPOSE

Under the Occupier's Liability Act (1957) it is our duty to take such care, as is in all the circumstances reasonable, to ensure that visitors will be reasonably safe in using the premises for the purpose for which they are permitted to be there. As children are expected to be less careful than adults, the standard of care we are required to take will be higher. If anything on the premises is an allurements or danger to children, reasonable care must be taken to protect them from that danger. It is essential that all staff take the welfare and safety of children seriously, but in no instance would staff be expected to take on parental responsibilities for children in libraries or agree to look after a child.

4. SCOPE

Although staff are not expected to take responsibility for children in libraries the welfare of the child is paramount.

5. OBJECTIVE

- Ensuring Child safety by determining supervision
- Clearly outlined safety policies for both the child and staff
- Making sure permission is always granted by the parent for various uses of the library

6. POLICY DETAILS

6.1. Children in the library - supervision

Unsupervised children

Library staff can never act in loco parentis. The library is an open, public place. Children under the age of eight should always be accompanied by a parent/carer. If a child under the age of eight is not being appropriately supervised, indicate politely and gently to the accompanying adult to keep an eye on the child. If a child under the age of eight has been left unaccompanied in the library, when the adult returns ask them politely and gently to remain with their child in future. It may be necessary to explain the policy.

6.1.1. What to do if a child is unaccompanied and wants to leave alone

If you can ascertain, or already know, that the child is allowed to come and go alone and you feel that they are likely to get home safely then let them go. If you are in any doubt then encourage the child to stay while you contact the parent/carer or escalate internally. If the

child is under eight, do not let them go home alone. Instead contact the parent or Duty Officer.

6.1.2. Unaccompanied children at closing time

Ask the child if they are expecting someone to collect them. Don't wait until closing time to take the next step. If no-one seems to be turning up then try to contact a parent/carer (you may find their contact details on the Library Management System). If you cannot contact anyone you will need to escalate it internally. Never escort a child home yourself. If a parent repeatedly leaves a child unaccompanied at closing time then the library supervisor should contact the parent.

6.1.3. Children over 8 years who should be at school

Children over eight can visit the library alone. This may happen during school hours and staff may be concerned that they may be truants. Libraries, however, are to be regarded as a safe haven and anyone under 16 should be allowed to stay without feeling threatened or challenged by anything or anyone. Younger children may visit the library during school hours with parents or carers or alternative education providers. If you have any safeguarding or welfare concerns escalate them to your line manager or a team leader. If a safeguarding referral is required then the contact numbers for MASH are 01344 352005 or 01344 786543 (after hours).

Any problems to do with truancy will not be for library staff or volunteers to address. If there are children who are behaving badly or inappropriately, then warnings should be given. Unacceptable behaviour in breach of the Byelaws will be dealt with in accordance with the Byelaws. It is important that children who are not at school feel safe in the library.

6.2. Safety Considerations

6.2.1. Safety Information for children

NSPCC and Childline details are prominently displayed in the library. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Public Internet Access policy covers safe use of the Internet for all customers.

6.2.2. Staff safety

Staff should ensure that they protect themselves in the following ways:

- Don't accompany a child to the toilet
- Don't initiate physical contact
- Don't allow a child to sit on your knee during story-time or other activities
- Staff are required to attend Safeguarding training

6.2.3. Adults in children's section of the library

The children's section must be clearly demarcated as such. In this sensitive area staff should be cautious but the child's welfare must come first. An adult in the children's area but

not seeming to use it should be directed to seating in the adult library or helped in finding the information they require and encouraged to leave the children's library. Staff should stay with the adult until they have left the children's area and inform a senior member of staff if they remain concerned. Polite notices suggesting only accompanied adults are encouraged to be in the children's or teenage areas are permitted but do understand that sometimes parents select books for their children or teens and should not be discouraged from doing so. However once they have selected the items they should move out of the space.

6.2.4. Use of Toilets

Children should be allowed to use staff toilets if no public toilets are available but staff should not enter the cubicle with them.

6.2.5. Taking Photographs

Permission is required from the parent for a child under 13 to be photographed by Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead staff. Young people from the age of 13 can provide their own consent.

7. Events and activities

All Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Library activities for young people will be less than two hours. Ofsted inspection regime will therefore not apply although Ofsted guidelines have informed this policy

7.1. Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead L&RC guidelines

- Parents should stay with young children and with children with extreme allergies or who are more likely to be at risk.
- For class or group visits the accompanying adults (teachers, for example) should remain with the group.
- When guests or volunteers run or assist with a session, they must be DBS checked.
- Children with disabilities will be actively encouraged to participate in activities and will not be discriminated against.
- Staff and volunteers must make themselves aware of first aid arrangements. If you use the first aid kit at a branch, ensure the items you use are replaced.
- Staff must wear their badges in order to be identifiable.
- Limit numbers that attend events based on the number of adults that will be present and the size of the venue.
- Parents must be aware that they are expected to collect their children when the event finishes. Events should finish at least half an hour before library closing time to give parents time to collect their children.
- If an unaccompanied child wishes to leave early try to persuade them to stay until they are collected. If you feel, with good reason, that they will be in danger then escalate your concerns internally.
- Events Registers should include an emergency contact number for the parent/carer. If children are left alone at the event (over eights only) then keep a register of all children with parent's name and contact number and any known medical conditions (including what library staff should do in an emergency). Data protection prevents us from keeping these lists for longer than absolutely necessary. They should be shredded once all children have been collected.

- Staff undertaking external visits: The organisation being visited remains responsible for the children. Library staff should not be left alone with the children. Staff must ensure that they are wearing a staff badge.
- Library Evacuation during an event:
The member of staff or volunteer leading the event is to ensure all children attending the event are evacuated and accounted for (take register of attendees with you). If a child is unaccounted for inform the emergency services immediately. Stay with the children until they are collected.

7.2. Bullying in the library

If you witness a child being bullied you have a duty to do what you can to stop it, including asking the bully to leave if necessary. Libraries should be places where children feel safe.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All library and museum staff and volunteers have been cleared through a DBS or enhanced DBS check.

Library and Resident Contact Lead

Library and Resident Contact Team Leaders

9. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Library and Resident Services Management Team and the Deputy Leader of the Council, Corporate & Resident Services, Culture & Heritage and Windsor; Armed Forces Champion

9.1. Surveying and Consultation

Consultation is carried out with all customers including children. The information is used to find out about service performance, to plan for service development and for internal marketing purposes.

In general, permission is required when surveying children under 13 unless collecting only statistical data where individuals cannot be identified. If visiting an outside group, it is important to give enough notice so that parents and children can all be informed. If approaching children ensure the publicity is very clear, explaining what you are doing and why, and how the information will be used. You do not need permission when asking children general questions where you will not use or publish the information in such a way that the individual child could be identified. Interviewers need to wear identification. Children cannot be interviewed alone in a separate room – all one-to-one interviews with children are to be in public places.

10. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

L&RC – Library and Resident Contact