

## Library Children's Services Policy

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Responsible Officer	Manager Customer & Community Services	Date Approved:	25/05/2022
Review Officer:	Coordinator Libraries	Review Due:	30/04/2026
Author:	Coordinator Libraries	Commencement:	25/05/2022

### 1. PURPOSE

To provide young people and their parents/carers with a clear understanding of the scope of children's library services provided by Mareeba Shire Council (Council) library branches and the respective responsibilities of parents/carers and Council.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council operated library facilities.

### 3. POLICY STATEMENT

Council's policy for young people accords with relevant local, state and federal government policies and aims to facilitate the right of every child to information to strengthen cultural and reader development.<sup>1</sup> The library service provides children with open access to all resources and media and various activities for children, families and caregivers which have been designed to encourage children to become confident and competent people and facilitate families' engagement with the community.<sup>2</sup>

Council exercises no limitation on access to publications or children's use of electronic resources including the internet. Council's *Library Public Internet Use Policy* states that parents/carers are responsible for supervising their child's use of technology, in the library and their selection and use of all physical library resources. Unclassified library resources are made available to all library users, including young people, without restriction. The library has no censorship role in its choice of library resources that form the collection.

#### 3.1 CLASSIFICATION OF FILMS AND ACCESS

Australia has a national classification scheme under which films, computer games and certain publications, that are to be displayed, demonstrated, sold, hired, advertised, or publicly exhibited, are generally required to be classified.<sup>3</sup> The classification given to a film, or a computer game depends on the presence of violence, sex, language, themes, drug use and nudity. Library members under the age of 18 are not permitted to access films with a "R" rating, and members under the age of 15 may only access films rated "MA" with the consent

<sup>1</sup> See generally State Library of Queensland, Policies and guidelines <<https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/about-us/corporate-information/policies-and-guidelines>>.

<sup>2</sup> See generally State Library of Queensland, Services for young people and families <<https://plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/managing-my-library/operating-library/community-engagement/services-young-people-and-families>>.

<sup>3</sup> See generally Queensland Government (23 February 2018) <<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/your-rights/right-to-protest-freedom-of-speech-and-censorship/classification-laws>>.

#### Human Rights Compatibility Statement

This policy has been drafted in alignment with obligations under s 58 of the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld).

of their parent or guardian. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child's selection of materials from the general collection accords with the family's personal values and beliefs.

### 3.2 UNATTENDED CHILDREN

Library staff will provide a duty of care but cannot supervise children whilst carrying out work responsibilities. They are unable to provide the necessary degree of supervision desirable for young children. This responsibility remains at all times with the parent/guardian. Libraries do not have the facilities or appropriate licences to attend to children who are sick, injured, or hungry.

Parents who leave a child/young person unattended in a library may be exposing their child to potential harm. Libraries are busy public places, open to all, and library staff cannot monitor and determine which members of the public may present a possible danger to children.

It is an offence for a person who, having the lawful care or charge of a child under 12 years of age to leave a child without supervision for an unreasonable time.<sup>4</sup> Library staff will assist having regard to the circumstances at hand.

A child of any age who appears distressed as a result of being left in a library unaccompanied by an adult for any length of time, or appears unable to look after themselves independently and appears unable to abide by all library policies and exhibit acceptable behaviour, will draw an action from library staff. Where possible, library staff will endeavour to arrange for a parent, carer or educator identified to be responsible for the child, to collect the child. If such arrangement cannot be made, the child will be considered at risk and the Queensland Police Service will be notified.

### 4. REPORTING

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No additional reporting is required

### 5. DEFINITIONS

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**Council** – means the Mareeba Shire Council.

**Duty of care** – means a legal duty to take reasonable care not to cause harm to another person that could be reasonably foreseen.

### 6. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

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*Library Public Internet Use Policy (MSC)*

### 7. REVIEW

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It is the responsibility of the Manager Customer & Community Services to monitor the adequacy of this policy and implement and approve appropriate changes. This policy will be formally reviewed every four (4) years or as required by Council.

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<sup>4</sup> See *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld) sch 1 s 364A. A time period determined to be unreasonable is not specified at s 364A.