

STATE LIBRARY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN IN THE STATE LIBRARY

1. Purpose

To ensure that staff are aware of how to manage the presence of children in the State Library.

2. Context

The current policies on children in the State Library are underpinned by the *Regulations for the Conduct of the State Library* which state that:

“Persons under fourteen years of age shall not enter the library except with the permission of the librarian” (Regulation 5).

Since the Regulations were gazetted a very different library and social environment has emerged and the State Library now seeks to actively encourage children to use and enjoy the premises freely, frequently, widely and creatively and to do that in the context of more contemporary attitudes and social norms. As such, the State Library will assume that any person on State Library premises who requires individual supervision is actually receiving it from a parent, carer or educator.

3. Guideline Statement

To ensure that children’s experience of the State Library is consistently positive, whether accessing the collection, attending programs or using the internet, the State Library requires the cooperation of parents, carers and educators to make sure that:

- Children aged 0 – 8 years of age are supervised by a responsible adult at all times whilst in the State Library.
- Parents, carers and educators of children aged from 9 – 12 years remain in the building.

Parents, carers and educators or other adults accompanying children should alert a State Library staff member to:

- any bullying, intimidation or harassment experienced by the child
- any suspicion that children are being harmed.

Parents, carers and educators should be mindful of the following issues relevant to the care of children in the State Library:

- Libraries are busy public places, open to all, and staff cannot judge which members of the public may present a danger to children.

- The State Library does not supervise children’s use of collections. State Library staff are available to help children and their parents effectively navigate collections and the Internet.
- In order to ensure that children do not have access to inappropriate material on the internet, the computers designated for children’s use at the State Library use filtering software to inhibit access to selected Internet sites. While these filters are updated regularly, no internet filter is perfect and it remains the parents, carers or educators’ responsibility to be aware of what their child is viewing on the Internet.
- The State Library requires its staff, volunteers, presenters and performers who regularly work with children to hold a “Working with Children” card (issued by the Department of Child Protection) in order to work with children in the State Library.
- In general, children should not be brought into the workplace and into staff areas for any prolonged period. There is a general duty for employers to make sure that people who are not employees are not harmed in any way by the work activity, including children and young people who may be in workplaces for any reason and at any time. The State Library will make sure it is as safe as possible for these children and young people. However, we recognise that emergency situations sometimes occur, in which case the employee should seek their Cost Centre Manager or Team Leader’s approval to bring their child to work.

If State Library staff discover an unattended child on State Library premises the Rostered Senior Officer will endeavour to arrange for a parent, carer or educator responsible for the child to collect the child, following the *Procedures for Lost and Unattended Children*. If such an arrangement cannot be made, the child will be considered at risk and the Western Australian Police Service will be notified.

4. Documentation

Nil

5. Responsibilities

Director Client Services (development and management of guidelines).

6. References

Library Use Policy; Procedures for Lost and Unattended Children

7. Authorisation and Review

Approved by	State Library Executive on 2/11/10
Review date	2/11/13