CAIRNS LIBRARIES CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE GENERAL POLICY

Genevieve Lehmann (GL) : 1/53/1-09: #3704457

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Council adopts Cairns Libraries Children and Young People General Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This new General Policy has been developed to provide a transparent caring and safe environment for children and young people, their parents and carers whilst in Cairns Libraries branches across the Cairns Local Government Area (LGA).

It defines reasonable expectations, accountability and responsibilities of parents, educators and carers for children and young people when accessing Library services and facilities and other matters relevant to the care of children and young people in the library.

Of the 100,003 Cairns Libraries members 20,451 represent the age group 0-18 years. During October, 660 children and young people of all ages from infants to high school students attended professionally tailored literacy, education and technology programs in libraries across the region. New monthly membership in this category consistently ranges between 90-150 young people.

Local, state and national library professionals and services have been consulted during the preparation of this policy which provides clarity to Council and the community therefore minimising potential risk or uncertainty.

It is recommended that Council adopts the Cairns Libraries Children and Young People General Policy.

BACKGROUND:

Cairns Libraries provides extensive onsite services for children and young people and considers their welfare to be of the utmost importance when they visit libraries and interact with library officers. The escalating demands on library staff to increasingly interact on a regular basis with young people using library technology, online services and research tools, has also been an important factor in shaping this new Policy.

Australia wide, public library professional business standards have evolved to include policy statements in regards to children and young people. The proposed Cairns Libraries Children and Young People Policy will ensure that Cairns Libraries is meeting business standards and will provide transparent guidelines for Council and the community.
COMMENT:

Extensive research was undertaken when preparing this new policy for Council. Examples of other library services’ policies were reviewed and discussed.

The policy that is being presented to Council is directly aligned to the State Library of Queensland’s Children and Young People Policy. The State Library policy endeavours to cover all areas of children and young people interaction with libraries and therefore it was considered to be the most appropriate style of policy for Cairns Libraries.

CONSULTATION:

The policy has been prepared through detailed consultation with Cairns Libraries’ management team, library supervisors, staff and librarians, State Library of Queensland and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and various public library services across Australia. This policy has also been reviewed by Council’s Executive Team.

Council’s adopted Children and Young People Policy will be posted on www.cairnslibrary.com.au and www.cairns@qld.gov.au

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management (including financials):

The adoption of this policy will provide transparent guidelines for Council and the community therefore minimising potential risk and uncertainty.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

Corporate Plan

1.1.2 Encourage sporting, arts, library and cultural activities including the partnering and development of infrastructure and programs to support a range of learning, leisure and recreation programs.

4.1.1 Provide strategic direction to ensure council policies are established in a positive, innovative and transparent manner based on the mission and principles articulated in the Corporate Plan.

4.1.2 Provide strong organisational leadership and governance

Statutory:

Nil

Policy:

Cairns Libraries Children and Young People General Policy aims to provide a caring environment for children and young people and provide clear guidelines for their parents/carers and library officers.

The scope of this policy applies to all branches and sections of Cairns Libraries.
Sustainability:

**Resources:** The policy does not involve new materials or products

**Environment:** The policy does not impact the environment

**Community:** The policy includes actions that will provide/improve access to services for all members of the community and meets or exceed service standards

**Governance and economic management:** The policy will improve workplace safety and/or will train and equip staff to deal with potential risks.

Options:

That Council:

- Proceeds as per the recommendation; or
- Modifies the recommendation proposed; or
- Rejects the recommendation.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Cairns Libraries Children and Young People General Policy #3003606

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**General Manager Community, Sport and Cultural Services**
CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

CAIRNS LIBRARIES
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

Intent
The purpose of the Children and Young people Policy is to:

- Define the Cairns Libraries approach to providing for children and young people when in the library
- Define the Cairns Libraries expectations of parent, carers and educators
- Inform parents, carers and educators about matters relevant to the care of children and young people in the Library

Scope
This policy applies to all Cairns Libraries branches and surrounding areas

PROVISIONS

1. Providing for Children and Young people

Cairns Libraries actively encourages children and young people to use and enjoy the library freely, frequently, widely and creatively. Priorities in relation to children and young people are:

- Promoting and providing opportunities for improved access to Literacy and Literary programs
- Revealing the scope for exploration, discovery and learning in Cairns Libraries
- Stimulating interest in ideas, culture, creativity and learning
- Fostering the skills, critical capacities and multi-literacies necessary to effectively navigate diverse domains of information, knowledge and culture
- Equally valuing and catering for individual interests, capacities and personalities
- Bringing children and young people along the path of self-motivated, independent, and creative learning for life.

Programming for children and young people is based on child and young person centred philosophies and values.

Philosophies

All stages in the development, delivery and evaluation of programs and services for, with, by and about children and young people:

- Are grounded in the issues, interest and developmental needs of children and young people
- Incorporate processes for the meaningful engagement of children and young people
- Incorporate measures to ensure that partnerships with individuals and organisations align with the Cairns Libraries’ own child and young person centred approach
**Values**

Programming and services for children and young people:

- Celebrate the contemporary lives, cultures and identities of children and young people
- Value the things that children and young people can do and want to know
- Recognise the important role of parents, carers and educators in the lives of children and young people
- acknowledge the right of children and young people to access, contribute to, and comment upon the collections, services and programs of Cairns Libraries
- Understand the evolving social and community contexts in children and young people’s lives

**Legislative underpinning**


The object of the Act is “… to contribute to the cultural, social and intellectual development of all Queenslanders” One of the guiding principles for achieving the object is: “Children and young people should be supported in their understanding and use of library and informational services."

**2. Expectations of parents, carers and educators**

To ensure that children’s and young peoples’ experiences of the Cairns Libraries is consistently positive, Cairns Libraries seeks the cooperation of parents, carers and educators. Parents, carers and educators are asked to understand that:

- It is assumed that any person on Cairns libraries premises who requires individual supervision (including all children) is actually receiving it from a parent, carer or educator.
- It is required that children in Cairns Libraries be supervised by a responsible adult. Children using libraries always benefit from the encouragement and support of a caring adult.
- Parents or other adults accompanying children should alert Cairns Libraries staff to:
  - Any bullying, intimidation or harassment experienced by the child or young person and/or
  - Any suspicion that children or young people are being harmed

**3. Matters relevant to the care of children and young people in Cairns Libraries**

The following information may be relevant to parents, carers and educators in caring for children and young people in Cairns Libraries.

- Libraries are busy public places open to all, and staff cannot judge which members of the public may be dangerous or unpredictable
- Cairns Libraries does not censor its collections. Internet content and activity on the internet is similarly not censored or screened by use of filtering software or by any other means. (However, Cairns Libraries complies with laws limiting or prohibiting access to specified material, including laws limiting access to specified material on the basis of a person’s age)
• Cairns Libraries does not supervise children’s or young peoples’ use of collections or internet facilities. Professional library staff are available to help children and young people and their parents or carers effectively navigate collections and the internet.

4. Unattended children

If Library staff discovers an unattended child on Library premises, staff will endeavour to arrange for a parent, carer or educator 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.

5. Working with Children checks

Cairns Libraries requires volunteers, external consultants and contractors to hold a current Blue Card (issued by the Commission for Children and young People and Child Guardian) in order to work with children in the library.

Definitions

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>People aged 0 to 11 years</td>
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<td>Young People</td>
<td>People aged 12 to 25 years</td>
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References

The Policy is supported by:
• Libraries Act 1988
• State Library of Queensland - Children and Young People Policy
• State Library of Queensland - Intellectual Freedom Policy

This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.

General Manager Responsible for Review: General Manager Community, Sport & Cultural Services

ADOPTED:
DUE FOR REVISION:
REVOKED/SUPERSEDED: