



Children Unattended Procedure

Linked policy document	<i>This procedure details actions and processes pursuant to the Children Unattended Policy.</i>
Version No.	2.0 23 June 2015
Endorsement	General Manager Community Services, 19 May 2015 Policy Review Panel, 27 May 2015
Authorisation	Council, 23 June 2015
Expiry date	1 July 2018
Responsible officer	Manager Recreation & Youth and Manager Libraries
Procedure owner	Melton Library Coordinator , Recreation Coordinator

1. Purpose

Council's managed Community Services and Library Venues provide public spaces for people to socialise, learn and recreate in shared environments. From time to time, children are left unattended in these venues. This procedure provides a process for dealing with such instances.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to parent/care providers and children using Council's direct managed Community Services Venues. This procedure should be employed in situations or circumstances where it is identified that there is a child 12 years of age or under, unaccompanied by a parent/care giver.

3. Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Community Services Venues	Leisure Centres, Youth Centres and Community Libraries (ie. Caroline Springs Leisure Centre and the Melton Library & Learning Hub)
Child	A person under the age of 16 years. (Children and Young Persons Act (1998))
Parent / Care provider	Includes the legal guardian of the child and a responsible person over the age of 16 years who has been delegated responsibility for the child by its parent or legal guardian.
Unattended Child	Any child 12 years of age or under, unaccompanied by a parent/care giver.

4. Procedure

4.1 When a child aged 12 years or under is found unattended:

1. During venue operation hours, if a child is suspected of being aged 12 years or under and is unattended in a Community Services Venue, staff may approach the child and enquire their name and age.
2. Staff will attempt to locate the parent/care provider in the venue.
3. If the parent/care giver cannot be visibly located, the use of Public Address Systems will be employed; in addition to walking the venue in search of the parent/care provider.
4. Should the parent/care provider not be immediately found following announcement and physical search, staff will contact their immediate supervisor to advise of the circumstance.
5. After 10 minutes, if the parent/care provider is not within the Community Services Venue, a supervisory (if unavailable, staff) will attempt to contact a parent/care provider by telephone.
6. Staff will ask the child their full name and telephone number. If the child is unable to provide a telephone number, staff will search their records to locate a phone contact. This may include;
 - Search of library/leisure centre membership details;
 - Review local phone directories;
 - Contact the school the child attends
7. Telephone contact is attempted. After a period of thirty minutes, if the parent/care provider has not been located, police will be called.
8. If no contact details can be found, the police will be called.

4.2 If a child 12 years or under is found left unattended at closing time

Children left unattended at closing time may be deemed at risk and the following action must be taken.

1. Two staff members will remain with the child and attempt to contact the parent/care provider.
2. Staff members will contact their supervisory by telephone to ensure issues are communicated and senior staff support provided.
3. If the parent/care provider has not arrived within 10 minutes of closing time, staff shall attempt to contact a parent/care provider by telephone.
4. Staff will ask the child their full name and telephone number. If the child is unable to provide a telephone number, staff will search their records to locate a phone contact. This may include;
 - Search of library/leisure centre membership details;
 - Review local phone directories;
 - Contact the school the child attends
5. After a period of thirty minutes, if the parent/care provider has not been located, police will be called.

6. If no contact details can be found, the police will be called.
7. Two staff will remain with the child until the police arrive and take the child into their care.

4.3 Registration of incidents

All instances of unattended children are to be entered on the “Unattended Children” register located at each venue’s reception desk.

4.4 Collection of Children by parent/care provider

Upon collection of children, the parent/care provider is to be advised of the Unattended Children Policy and cautioned. Parent/care provider is to be given the “Guidelines for User” brochure.

If children are identified as having been left unattended on more than one occasion a letter will be sent to the parent/care provider of the child from the General Manager of Community Services with a copy of the Community Services Venues Unattended Children Policy.

4.5 Children 13 – 16 years

- A child aged 13 – 16 years may be asked to leave the venue if they are causing a disturbance to other patrons. Their parent/care provider may also be contacted if required.
- The child is legally the responsibility of their parent/care provider and should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

4.6 Lost Children

- If children become separated from their parent/care provider while in a Community Services Venue, staff will make every effort to locate the child’s parent/care provider.

4.7 Complaints

- All occurrences of unattended children will be recorded in “Unattended Children” register kept at each venue and reported to the centre’s Coordinator who then will report it to their Manager.
- Any complaint/appeal from a parent/care provider will be dealt with in the first instance by the centre’s Coordinator.
- Complaints/appeals that cannot be resolved by the Coordinator will be referred to the Manager.

5. Responsibility /Accountability

5.1	All Community Services Venues and Library staff have the responsibility of implementing this procedure across all locations.
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6. References and links to legislation and other documents

Name	Location
Children’s and Young Persons Act 1989	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
Children Unattended Policy	Policy and Procedures Intranet