

STRATFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY: CARE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN COUNCIL FACILITIES

DEPARTMENT: Community Services	RESPONSIBILITY:
SECTION: Community Services	Director Community Services
REVIEW DATE:	NEXT REVIEW: 2020/2023
VERSION: 1 D20/11426	APPROVAL DATE: 10/11/2020

BACKGROUND

This policy provides guidance for Council facility staff and users when children and youth are unaccompanied and/or not actively supervised in Stratford District Council facilities.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all facility users during opening hours and everyday facility use. For the purposes of this policy, caregivers must be 16 years and older in accordance with the Te Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions are used:

- Unaccompanied child refers to any child whose parent/caregiver is not within the Council facility.
- Actively supervised means that the parent/caregiver has the child within eyesight, is watching and ensuring the child is safe and is not disrupting staff or other facility users.

STATEMENT OF WELCOME

Children and youth are welcomed by Stratford District Council to use its resources, services and spaces in a safe and respectful manner.

PRINCIPLES OF CARE

- The safety and wellbeing of children and youth in the council facilities is a guiding principle at all times, and council staff will do their utmost to provide a safe and comfortable environment for all children and young people, while recognising the needs of other facility users.
- Parents or caregivers are responsible for the safety and behaviour of their children, and under law as per the Summary Offences Act 1981 must make reasonable provision for the care and supervision of their children.
- Stratford District Council recognises it is reasonable to expect children aged older than 8 to visit facilities on their own.
- Council staff will act on any reasonable concerns about the care or safety of children in facilities. Steps may include contacting the parent/guardian, school or if necessary, Police.

- Action may be taken by Council staff if they consider that supervision of a child under the age of 8 is inadequate.
- If there is recurring disruptive or inappropriate behaviour that impacts on other facility users and/or staff, the young people responsible may be asked to leave the facility. This action may also be taken in the case of disruptive younger children accompanied by a parent or caregiver.
- Police may be contacted if the caregiver or supervising adult cannot be found or contacted, particularly if the unaccompanied child is in distress.

PROCEDURE

Unaccompanied or unsupervised children of school age during school hours must be asked the circumstances under which they are not attending school. Steps may include contacting the parent/guardian, school or if necessary, Police.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Te Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- Education Act 1989
- Summary Offences Act 1981

RELEVANT POLICIES

- Stratford District Council Child Protection Policy
- Pool Alone Policy