

DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC LIBRARIES' GUIDELINES FOR THE PROTECTION AND SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Staff in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Public Libraries are fully committed to the Council's aim to create an environment in which children are listened to, given a sense of belonging, and kept safe; parents are supported and encouraged; and employees and volunteers who work with children and young people are supported and protected. Library staff respect and promote the principles of equality and diversity and they seek to work with all children in a culturally sensitive way within the context of the Irish constitution and law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This appendix refers specifically to the Council's public libraries –its environments, staff and usage - but is intended to be read within the context of the overall Child Protection Policy for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. The latter plus the dlr Library guidelines are now available on our website at www.dlrcoco.ie/library.

LIBRARY ENVIRONMENTS:

This includes the provision of the following:

- 1.1 A safe environment in library buildings that satisfy the highest level of health and safety regulations as stipulated by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.
- 1.2 Physical surroundings that are comfortable, fully accessible and appropriate.
- 1.3 Essential facilities such as public toilets and access to staff toilets under supervision when necessary.

LIBRARY STAFF:

On recruitment, library staff take part in a mandatory induction training period and undergo a standard probationary period. New library staff are made aware of the County Council Child Protection Policy and the identity and role of the designated persons. Regular staff training includes the provision of updates in relevant policies concerning children and a rolling programme of essential training such as First Aid training.

Staff in libraries are responsible for the following:

- 2.1 To promote awareness of the Child Protection Policy for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.
- 2.2 To ensure that the public has ready access to contact details for designated persons in dlr Library Service.
- 2.3 To ensure that personal details contained on library databases are not revealed to any third parties and are not used for any purpose other than official library use.
- 2.4 To ensure that appropriate internet policies are clearly available and regularly updated when necessary.

GENERAL LIBRARY USAGE:

The following are general guidelines for routine visits to libraries:

- 3.1 Children under the age of 8 should always be accompanied by a parent/guardian/teacher.
- 3.2 Unaccompanied children over the age of 8 frequently attend libraries in order to borrow books, research school projects or attend events. While every attempt will be made to ensure the safety of children in libraries, their supervision while visiting cannot be guaranteed. Library staff cannot fully monitor the behaviour of all library users and it is not feasible for staff to monitor whether or not the child leaves the library unaccompanied.
- 3.3 If the library has closed and a child has not been collected by a parent/guardian, it is not the responsibility of staff to wait with them until collection. Parents/ guardians should familiarise themselves with library closing times to ensure they are collected before closing time.
- 3.4 If a child needs to use a staff toilet in the absence of an available public toilet, the child must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. Visits to the toilet by children who are not accompanied by a parent/guardian are not encouraged. If the situation is unavoidable, ideally two library staff must be in attendance if feasible.
- 3.5 Disruptive behaviour by children and young people in libraries is unacceptable. If it occurs, a warning will be given but if the behaviour continues, the child will be offered the opportunity to call a parent to come and collect them. If they do not comply, staff will call the child's parent/guardian or the Gardaí and library facilities may be withdrawn from the child.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS USING DLR LIBRARIES

- 4.1 Students are welcome to use the facilities of dlr Library Service.
- 4.2 Students must be registered members of dlr Library Service and must bring their library card on each visit.
- 4.3 There is a specified number of study places in each branch. These are assigned on a first come first served basis and are allocated only in specified study areas.
- 4.4 For Health and Safety reasons students may not sit on the floor to study. Bookshelves and access areas must be kept clear.
- 4.5 Students are asked to respect library staff and other users. Just as the customer is entitled to the highest level of customer service, members of staff should receive the same levels of respect and courtesy from the customer.
- 4.6 Students are asked to comply with directions from library staff and to refrain from behaviour which would cause a disturbance to others.
- 4.7 Any person or group creating a disturbance will have to leave

- 4.8 the library for the remainder of the day or for a longer period. Students may be asked for their name and the name of their school/college.
- 4.9 Students are at all times responsible for their own property. For security reasons, study places must be cleared when the library is closed.
- 4.10 Mobile phones may be used in the Library on condition that phones are set to silent.
- 4.11 Food and drink (with the exception of bottled water) may not be consumed in the library.

LIBRARY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Events and activities for children and young people are regularly held in all branch libraries. Central to the philosophy of dlr Library Service is the belief that children are unconditionally respected and kept safe from harm while attending or participating in any library events.

The following points relate to this aspect:

- 5.1 School children are usually in the care of a teacher when attending a school organised event. Teachers must accompany schools groups and remain in attendance at all times whilst at library events.
- 5.2 Times for the start and finish of each event must be clearly stated to ensure safe collection of all participating children and young people.
- 5.3 For public workshops where parents are leaving the building, it is essential that they leave a contact name, phone number, address and refer to any specific requirement when enrolling. Parental consent may be required for some events.
- 5.4 As appropriate, parents/guardians will be encouraged to attend events with the children in their care.
- 5.5 An appropriate ratio of adults to young people should be considered, depending on the nature of the event, the age range and the dis/ability or other special needs of the participants. For events coordinated and run by library staff, council policy on the appropriate ratio of adults to young people will be followed.
- 5.6 The number of attendees should be within the maximum range as set out by health and safety guidelines for each branch library.
- 5.7 Children under 8 should not be left unsupervised after a library event. If a parent is delayed beyond 15 minutes after the event, they must be contacted by library staff. If beyond 60 minutes, staff may call the Gardaí.
- 5.8 Any recording or photography, taken either at an event organised for a school group or a general library event, must be undertaken with the consent of both the young person and their parents. Both the young person and their parents should be made aware of the way in which the image may be used: publication, online, archive, press purposes. If a parent/guardian is not present, library staff must ensure they have been informed in advance if an event is likely to be photographed or

- recorded. A Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Libraries Permission Form is available to distribute to parents/teachers.
- 5.9 To reduce the risk of inappropriate use, the content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child.
- 5.10 The code of behaviour for "Suppliers" (a generic term to describe artists, authors, curators, facilitators or volunteers) is available in the Child Protection Policy for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

DESIGNATED PERSONS:

Designated Persons in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Public Libraries are:

1. Designated Liaison Person for dlr Libraries: Marian Thérèse Keyes,
Senior Executive Librarian: Bibliographic Services, Reader Development and Outreach. Tel: +353 1 278 1788 | E-mail: mkeyes@dlrcoco.ie |

2. Deputy Designated Liaison Person for dlr Libraries: Oonagh Brennan,
Senior Librarian: Deansgrange Library
T: +353 285 0860 | E-mail: obrennan@dlrcoco.ie |

3. Deputy Designated Liaison Person for dlr Libraries: Carmel Kelly,
Senior Librarian: Dalkey Library
T: +353 298 5000 | E-mail: ckelly@dlrcoco.ie |

Any incident which raises concerns regarding the protection of children and young people in dlr Libraries must be reported and logged with the above designated persons.