

RANGITĪKEI DISTRICT COUNCIL

# UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN COMMUNITY HUBS GUIDELINES

To provide guidance for staff and patrons when children are visiting any Community Hub (Libraries/Information Centre/Youth Spaces) in the Rangitīkei District to ensure their safety and the enjoyment of the facility for all patrons.

# Unaccompanied Children and Youth in Community Hubs Guidelines

Rangitikei District Council welcomes and encourages all children to use our public Community Hubs (Libraries/Information Centre/Youth Spaces) throughout the district.

Our staff are available to support children to effectively use, learn, and grow in these spaces. However, staff cannot supervise any children (including those that are unaccompanied) in the Community Hub and have no childcare training to do so.

## PURPOSE

To provide guidance for staff and patrons when children are visiting any Community Hub in the Rangitikei District to ensure their safety and the enjoyment of the facility for all patrons.

## SCOPE

These guidelines apply to all Community Hubs in the Rangitikei District, including the Marton Youth HQ and Taihape Lobby, during normal opening hours and special events including school holiday programmes, unless specified otherwise in the event information.

These guidelines specifically relate to the care and supervision of children who use the Community Hubs, to always ensure their safety.

It is an offence under s10 of the Summary Offences Act 1981 where a Caregiver does not make reasonable provision for the care and supervision of a Child.

## DEFINITIONS

**ACTIVE SUPERVISION** requires the caregiver to remain close to the child while the child is in the Community Hub, must watch the child, and must be in a position to help the child if required at all times.

**CAREGIVER** is a person over the age of 14 who is supervising a child and may be a parent, permanent caregiver, legal guardian, and a person who is over the age of 14 years who is not a parent, permanent caregiver, or legal guardian, but may be a relative or casual caregiver who has taken responsibility for that child.

**CHILD or CHILDREN** is a person under 14 years as defined by Te Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, and Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989.

**SUPERVISED PROGRAMME OR EVENT** is a programme or event organised by Council that is advertised as being supervised by staff. This includes programmes held at the Taihape Lobby and Marton Youth HQ provided that the child meets the age requirements of the programme running at that time.

**UNACCOMPANIED CHILD** is a child who is not accompanied by a caregiver.

## COMMUNITY HUB PATRONS OBLIGATIONS

- Children under the age of 10 must be actively supervised at all times.
- Children 10 and older must have a caregiver present in the facility at all times.
- No children can be left unaccompanied for any period of time.
- All patrons, including children must adhere to the Rangitikei District Council Community Hub Visitor Code of Conduct.
- Children may attend supervised programmes and events without a caregiver present. Children must be collected at the conclusion of a supervised programme or event otherwise the child will be considered unaccompanied.

## ROLE OF STAFF

- Community Hub staff will act on any reasonable concerns about the care or safety of unaccompanied children but will not assume responsibility for the care of those children.
- Children behaving inappropriately including not respecting the space, the people with whom they are sharing the space, or following the direction of staff, may be asked to leave.
- If a child is left unaccompanied, staff will make reasonable attempts to contact a caregiver. If a caregiver cannot be contacted, the police may be contacted.
- Anyone under the age of 16 utilising the Community Hub during school hours may be asked for a reasonable explanation. If staff are not satisfied with the explanation a Truancy Officer may be contacted.
- Staff may choose to implement a suspension for repeated breaches of this guideline.