



Service to After-Schoolers

Policy Number: LS 504

Effective: May 2019

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the program of service for minors visiting the library in large numbers after school and to provide direction for staff in managing the challenges presented by unaccompanied minors. After-schoolers are not permitted to congregate either inside or outside of the library for the sole purpose of awaiting transportation and must be engaged in library activities and abide by the *Code of Conduct LS 502*.

Policy

The Library welcomes children of all ages and provides access to a wide range of services. The Library's goal is to provide access to technology and information, education, culture, leisure, and community engagement activities. Factors influencing services provided to students include: number of students, behavior, duration of visit, and the impact on other customers.

Library staff will:

- Create an environment that is safe and welcoming to customers of all ages.
- Provide youths with easy access to current information and quality literature in a variety of formats.
- Provide informative, educational, and entertaining programs that encourage the use of the library or enhance cultural awareness.
- Serve as a social or community gathering space to encourage the exchange of ideas, information, and resources while engaged in library activities
- The library recognizes that children are not always accompanied by a parent or guardian; however, the library cannot function as a substitute for appropriate child care or after-school programs.

Children under the age of 11 years may not be left alone in the library and must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or a responsible caregiver aged at least 14 years. This age determination was made in consultation with experts in the area of child development, paying special attention to emotional and mental capabilities as well as the development of control over behavior and judgment. Staff cannot function as caregivers and the library is not equipped to provide childcare services. Parents and guardians are responsible for their child's behavior, safety, and welfare. Staff that encounter children under 11 years of age alone in the library will attempt to contact a parent or caregiver.

Procedure

The Library maintains a welcoming environment for all users through the enforcement of the Library's Code of Conduct (LS 502). After-schoolers and unaccompanied minors present unique challenges as a result of their varied ability to function independently and capacity for self-control. In recognition of this the library has developed specialized programs to address after-schoolers' need for a social outlet as a part of their library experience. These specialized services include movies, crafts, volunteer opportunities as well as organized activities. Every library will offer the following for after-schoolers:

Social Zones – An area for students to interact with peers, socialize, engage in library programming, and gaming.

Quiet Homework Resource Center – A quiet area for students to work on school assignments.

Computers for personal productivity – Computers for individual students to access Microsoft Office, the Internet, databases, and all of the libraries electronic resources.

Quiet reading areas – Space for students to read and enjoy books and learning.

The library has developed a protocol for the handling of Code of Conduct violations that is tailored to the developmental needs of minors with the goal of creating productive partnership with parents and school personnel. This protocol is progressive and aimed at developing an understanding of appropriate behavior and the opportunity for active engagement with library resources and services and features the following steps:

Verbal Warning – An explanation of appropriate behaviors and expectations are provided.

Formal Warning – Failure to comply with verbal warnings will result in minors being asked to leave the library property.

Parental Visit – A pattern of conduct violations or serious infractions will require that a parent or guardian must accompany the minor before he or she can return to the library.

Trespass Notice – This step is only taken in response to property damage, criminal activity, violence, and/or repeated refusal to follow the direction of staff or any other severe infractions.

In all cases, visitors to the library are expected to follow the direction of staff, and refusal will be grounds for immediate removal from the library property. Staff may use the student's HAAL pass number for recordkeeping and to assist in identification. Assistance from law enforcement is authorized as needed or warranted.