

Shaw Public Library Unattended and Disruptive Children Policy

Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children while they are in the Library. The Shaw Public Library staff is committed to help children with activities related to the Library. However, Library staff cannot, nor is it their responsibility to serve as baby-sitters, teachers, or disciplinarians. Violations of this policy are grounds for suspension of library privileges. Whenever advisable, the Library will notify the parent of incidents involving an unattended or disruptive child. [Form follows.]

Children under the age of 9 must be accompanied and directly supervised at all times by a parent or other responsible caregiver. When the safety of an unattended child is in doubt, or the parent or responsible caregiver cannot be located, or if the Library is closing, library staff is authorized to call the police and stay with the child until the police arrive. Attempts will be made to reach parents, but in no instance will staff take young people home

From time to time, the Shaw Public Library schedules or provides programs that are designed and suitable for attendance by children without parental supervision. Such program announcements will so indicate, and if no indication is included, then supervision is required. When so indicated, if the parent or caregiver intends to be absent, they must leave word at the circulation desk as to their whereabouts and, if possible, a phone number where they or a responsible adult can be contacted.

Children over the age of 9 may use the Library unattended by an adult, subject to other Library rules and policies concerning behavior, conduct, and demeanor.

Disruptive behavior is any behavior on library premises that infringes on the rights of others using the library as referenced in the Patron Code of Conduct. In order to assure an environment conducive to reading and viewing and to promote an atmosphere in which lifelong learning and personal development can occur, disruptive children will not be allowed to interfere with library service to others. Library staff will approach disruptive children in the following manner:

Give a verbal warning to the child indicating that such behavior is disruptive to other library users and is unacceptable.

If the disruptive behavior continues, approach the parent or guardian with the same warning. If the child is unattended, give the child a second warning.

If the disruptive behavior still continues, request the parent or guardian to escort the child from the library premises. If the child is unattended, staff should use discretion in asking the child to leave taking into consideration the child's safety.

If the child's disruptive behavior continues and he or she refuses to leave the library premises, library staff will call the police dispatcher.

Library staff will document any incidents involving unattended or disruptive children and inform the Director. In all instances, the Director must be informed before appropriate action is taken.

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UNATTENDED OR DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN PARENTAL NOTIFICATION LETTER

Dear _____,

The Shaw Public Library has recently experienced an incident involving your child, _____, where they were: _____ on Library grounds unattended by you or a responsible caregiver. _____ behaving in a manner disruptive to library services.

A copy of the Library's policy on Unattended or Disruptive Children is enclosed here for your attention. We ask that you review this policy and make every effort to follow it. We do not wish to suspend Library privileges for you or your family, but the safety of children as well as the proper operation of the Library is our first responsibility. If you have any questions regarding this policy or its enforcement, please contact the undersigned.

Very Truly Yours,

Board President or Library Director