

UNATTENDED AND DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN POLICY

Children are welcome in the Everett Free Library and are encouraged to use the library. The Everett Library staff is committed to help children with activities related to the library. However, library staff cannot, nor is it their responsibility, serve as baby-sitters, teachers, or disciplinarians. Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children while they are in the library. 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.

Children under the age of eight (8) must be accompanied and supervised at all times by a parent or other responsible caregiver. The caregiver must be at least fourteen (14) years old. 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 or other social service agency and stay with the child until the police or the social service agent arrives. Attempts will be made to reach parents, but in no instance will staff take young people home.

From time to time, the Everett 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, age eight (8) and over, may use the Library unattended by an adult, subject to other Library rules and policies concerning behavior, conduct, and demeanor.

Children of any age with mental, physical, or emotional problems which render supervision necessary will be accompanied by a parent or other caregiver at all times.

Disruptive behavior is any behavior on library premises that infringes on the rights of others using the library. 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. Incidents that require the assistance of the police may result in suspension of library privileges

Library staff will document any incidents involving unattended or disruptive children and inform their supervisor. In all instances, the staff member in charge must be informed before appropriate action is taken. Repeated abuse of library policies may result in the suspension of library privileges.

If there are any infractions, the unattended child will be asked to leave the library and will not be permitted back in the library for three months, and then only after a conference with the director of the library.