

SPOKANE COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

POLICY: CHILDREN'S SAFETY IN LIBRARIES

Approval Date: March 19, 2013

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Reaffirmation Date: March 21, 2023

Related Policies

Access to Library Services

Code of Conduct

Collection Development

Computer, Wireless Network and Internet Use

Customer Privileges and Responsibilities

Purpose

Defines the responsibilities of parents, guardians, and caregivers whose children use Spokane County Library District facilities. Describes how the District responds to situations involving at-risk children.

Definitions

Resources: For the purpose of this policy, the term "resources" encompasses the District's collection, as well as services, programs, and events.

Parents: For the purpose of this policy, the term "parents" refers to the legal guardian(s) of any minor child, and/or any adult standing *in loco parentis*.

In loco parentis: An individual stands *in loco parentis* when the individual acts in place of a parent and/or assumes responsibilities of a parent.

Policy

Spokane County Library District strives to create places, programs, and services that encourage children and adults to explore, learn, and create. The District respects the privacy of members who use its libraries. No employee, officer, or agent of the District stands *in loco parentis*. The District recognizes it is the responsibility of parents to monitor and guide their children's use of District facilities and resources, reading and viewing of library materials, and use of District computers and network resources to access the Internet.

Children's Use of District Facilities

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children are cared for, safe, and feel secure when visiting a District library or attending a library event. District facilities, educational programs and staff cannot act as child care or as replacements for parents, guardians, or caregivers.

District personnel will take appropriate action if a child visiting a library appears to be "at risk," such as:

- Children who appear to be under the age of six (6) left alone at a library.
- Children of any age who become disruptive or appear to be distressed when left alone or in the care of other children at a library.
- Children who appear to be subjected to physical or emotional abuse while using District facilities.
- Children who appear to be subjected to uninvited interactions.
- Children left alone at closing time who appear to be under the age of 12 or appear distressed.

If a situation such as one of the above occurs, staff shall follow established District procedures, which may include notification of a parent, law enforcement, and/or child protective services agency.

Children's Use of Library Resources

Children's Use of Library Resources is addressed in the District's Collection Development policy.

The Executive Director will establish administrative procedures necessary to implement this policy. Any appeal of an administrative action under this policy will first be made in writing to the Executive Director and then to the Board of Trustees.

The District will make a good faith effort to implement this policy in a fair and consistent manner.