



August 2018

Back to School Message for Bellingham Parents & Guardians

We can't believe the summer is almost over! Don't hesitate to get your summer reading materials now before the end of summer crunch hits!

We are ramping up our plans for the 2018-2019 After School Programs for the upcoming school year. We are expanding some program offerings and are hoping to make after school programs at the library the best ever! But, before we get into detail about the exciting programming, we want to update parents on the services and programs the library offers.

First, it is most important that parents understand that the library does not act "in loco parentis". Permitting your child to come to the library after school unattended is akin to dropping them off at the mall. Library policy states: **"The library does not assume responsibility for the behavior or safety of children of any age who are left unaccompanied in the library. This includes watching children while parents participate in library programs or other activities in the library."**

Policy on Children in the Library - [Click here](#) for the full policy on children in the library.
Behavior Policy - We do, however, have behavior standards for middle and high school students that they must adhere to in order for them to use the library unattended. [Click here](#) for the full behavior policy.

We ask that parents/guardians please review the information on the next few pages so you understand the library programs and expectations.

We thank you for your attention to these issues and hope the 2018-2019 school year is a productive and great experience for your child and look forward to the library being a partner in making that happen!

[Bernadette Rivard](#), Library Director

[Steve Fowler](#), Senior Youth Services Librarian (serving ages 0-12)

[Amanda Maclure](#), Youth Services Librarian (serving grades 6-12)

Heidi Santucci, Library Assistant (serving grades 6-12)

[Diane Nelson](#), Library Assistant (serving grades 4-7)

What's up at the library for the 2018-2019 school year?

Our plans include ways to make the after school experience at the library optimal for both the children and the library staff! In the past, we have had some minor issues that we hope these new offerings will help resolve.

New this Year - Outside the Library

We often have groups of children meeting outside the library in the lobby or around the bench area. This is not a problem when it is just a few children, but it often becomes crowded and impedes access for others trying to enter and exit the library. This year we will be requesting that the front area of the library only be used for a waiting area to be picked up when a ride is expected within 10 minutes. During the fall, spring and summer seasons, we will be providing picnic table seating space in the area outside of the Teen Room. In the winter, the space will not be available when there is snow on the ground. The space will not be accessible from the library, but can be accessed from the parking lot. That will be the space where children wishing to gather outside the library should meet. We are hoping that this will help with the crowds near the front door. **Although library staff does not routinely supervise activity outside the building, this area is within view of the Teen Room staff and the Library Director's Office.**

This Year's Programs!

After School Programs!

The Bellingham Library is pleased to announce our upcoming After School Program schedule for the 2018-2019 School Year. Hours vary on early release days so check the library calendar for details on program hours on those days.

For Middle School (Grades 4-7)

Miss Diane will once again be hosting ASK (After School Kids) in the Children's Program Room on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 2:30-4:45 when school is in session. This program will resume the Tuesday after Labor Day. New this school year: Once a month on Thursdays, Miss Diane will be offering a special program for this age group. Keep an eye on the library calendar for the dates!

For Teens (Grades 6-12)

Amanda and Heidi will be in the Teen Room on Monday through Friday from 2-5 pm. The Teen Room has video games and board games and new this year will be more craft supplies for creative projects!

Annual Reminders!

Parking Lot Safety

Children leaving the library building often do so without exercising proper caution in the parking lot, both on foot and on bicycles. When we witness it, we make clear to them that cars are coming and going from the lot and they need to be more cautious.

We ask that you aid us in informing your children that the parking lot is not a congregating or recreation area. If your child is NOT using library services, we ask that they not loiter on library property in the after school hours.

After School Parking Pickup Notice

For the safety of all library patrons we ask that parents who are picking up children from our afterschool program park either in the overflow lot at the far end of the library lot or on the field access road. Parking spaces in front of the building are reserved for patrons that are in the library.

Parking, stopping or standing in front of the cartwheel girl statue waiting for your child to exit the library is not permitted. When cars line up in front of the statue waiting for their child to exit the library it creates problems with people entering and exiting the library lot, as well as visibility issues for the people walking in the parking lot.

Supervision & Attendance

Our programs and the library building are supervised by library staff, but children who come to the library are free to use most areas of the building and are also free to come and go from the building. We often have children who attend a program for a short time, leave the building, and return a while later.

Keeping in touch with your child

We often receive phone calls from parents inquiring if their child is at the library or wishing to speak with their child. ***We are unable to search the building to locate a child or permit our phones to be used by the public, except in cases of emergencies.*** We ask that you coordinate details with your child so that they are able to contact you, and vice versa.

You should be aware that the cell signal in many areas of the library is not consistent and calls are often not able to be made or received inside the building. The best way to communicate with your child may be through a service that uses WiFi as our WiFi signal is active throughout the building. We also have a constant issue with children asking to use the phone to call to be picked up. ***Our telephone lines are needed for library business, so we ask that you plan in advance a time for pickup, or arrange for your child to have***

access to a phone. From now on, we will only be calling a parent/guardian one time in a 3 month period, unless it is an emergency situation.

Library Cards

Often children come to the library without their library cards. **We ask that if your child will need to use the library computers or check out library materials that they carry their card with them.** Library staff has the authority to refuse lending library materials without proper identification.

Library Spaces

Teen Room – The Teen Room is open and we encourage all 6th to 12th graders to spend their after school hours in that area. The room has study tables and Internet access, a great space for doing homework. If the Teen Room is too noisy for quiet study or Internet work, there are other options for 6th to 12th graders.

Children's Program Room – ASK (After School Kids) is our after school program for 4th-7th graders. It is scheduled on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 2:30 pm to 4:45 pm on days when school is in session.

Adult Study, Lounge & Computer Area – Students are welcome to use these areas knowing they need to be respectful of appropriate noise levels, as people are often studying in these areas.

Study Room – The Study Room is available for individual high school students (grades 8-12) and for groups of up to four people, as long as the person who signs out the room is over 18 and one of the participants. The Study Room may be used for group or quiet study for up to one hour (longer if no one is waiting to use the room). The room is available on a first-come, first-served basis, and users must sign in at the circulation desk to use the room. Food and drink is allowed in the room, but all trash must be properly disposed of and the room must be left in good condition when vacated. It is the responsibility of the person signing out the room to make sure it is in good condition before leaving.

Children's Room – Fourth and fifth graders that are not attending library programs should be in the Children's Room area of the library, not in the adult area, unless they need to use the computers.