DT: 6-29-21
TO: Cape Elizabeth Town Council
FR: Rachel Davis
RE: Additional documentation regarding after school use of the library
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Below for your reference are a collection of emails, in chronological order, related to the many issues posed by our after school crowd, detailing our attempts to constructively address them over the years.

To: John Holdridge [school volunteer coordinator]
Fr: Rachel Davis
Re: "TML After School Hangout" proposal
Dt: Fri, Dec 30, 2016, 3:07 PM

Since we opened in our new building we have found that kids in elementary and middle school come to the library after school whether or not we have a program going on, and their energy level is somewhat disruptive to many of our adult library users, and those who come here for a quiet place to work, relax, or study. In addition, the location of our game room, right beside two quiet study rooms, has proven to be problematic and counterproductive for those trying to use the study rooms. We have come up with a plan we hope will address these issues, while accommodating the legitimate needs and developmentally appropriate temperament of our after school crowd.

We want to turn one half of our Community Room into an "After School Hangout" area, and relocate some of the more disruptive game room room activity to the lower level. We plan to staff the room with a librarian, but are hoping to recruit some responsible older teen volunteers who could help with monitoring behavior and the activities in this room. Kyle and I wanted to get your feedback on what you think of our plan, and the feasibility of finding teen volunteers who could commit to this program.

I"m attaching a DRAFT program flyer, program plan, and proposed volunteer job description. Could you take a look and let us know what you think?

Thanks so much!

And Happy New Year!

Rachel

Reply:

Below will run in morning announcements for the next 2 weeks. Jeff is willing to consider credits as a pilot to an internship program. That is on our end and shouldn't

impact anything on your end. If students don't know about that option, feel free to point them in my direction.

TEEN LEADER INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY
Thomas Memorial Library has announced a new internship opportunity for teen leaders in their afterschool program. Selected students may be eligible for CEHS credits for successful completion of a semester long internship. Follow this link for information and to apply for the internship. Contact John Holdridge in room 206C to explore credit options.

--
John Holdridge M.S. Ed

To: Tom Kohan (High school special services ed tech)
Fr: Rachel Davis
Re: Internship opportunity at the library

Hi, Tom! How are you?

I am looking for high school volunteers to help monitor a new after school program for younger students, and I was hoping you could pass along the information to students you know might be interested. Here's the link to the details, the job description, and the application form:
http://www.thomasmemoriallibrary.org/library-seeks-teen-interns-new-school-program/

Thanks so much!

Rachel

Reply:

I have forwarded the information to students and Chris Newell, the faculty advisor of the Volunteer Club. I will keep you posted on any interest here.
Thank you!
Tom

To: Kyle
Fr: Rachel Davis
Re: Backpacks
Dt: Fri, Feb 3, 2017, 4:31 PM

So even if there's only a handful of kids in the Community Room, somehow we end up with a mountain of backpacks by the door. So I'm thinking that since the backpacks are only a problem after school, why don't we tell kids that all backpacks need to be dropped off in the Community Room, unless they are taking them to a study area? That might actually entice them to use the room, once they drop their stuff off. Would one of those wall sign holders fit above the coat racks? It could say something like "After School: Please put backpacks, jackets, and instruments in the Community Room down the hall."

What do you think?

[Photo of backpacks, etc., on a typical winter day after school]:

To: [adult volunteer, retired teacher]
Fr: Rachel Davis
Re: Volunteering Wed 2/8
Dt: Wed, Feb 8, 2017, 12:28 PM

I am working on ways to get kids more involved with different activities. I'm thinking we can have a "daily menu" of offerings, and signs on each of the tables for different activities, such as board games, learn to crochet (I can do that--I crochet, and someone donated a bunch of yarn and crochet hooks, as well as knitting needles.) You could teach knitting if you like! Or paper crafting. I'm also thinking of a "Make a Difference" table, to get kids to participate in volunteer projects. For example, I need volunteers to help sort the many donated items for homeless shelters we've received from our shelter drive. What do you think?

Rachel

Reply:

Hi Rachel,

I think you've got some great ideas! Here are my limited observations.   Take them for what they are and maybe they will help shape what direction to go in…

Many of the kids who go to the library after school (the regulars who come every day) seem to be interested only in the technology- either video games or using the laptops/iPads.

I made a binder of "learn to draw" activities from an online site, and I was there to demonstrate/help out as needed. (Kids learn to draw a picture, step by step) I only had one girl who wanted to try it. She did it for about 5 minutes, then abandoned it.

The younger kids who come on Wednesdays to read to the dog drop by to play addition/multiplication math games, and do the craft activity. Therefore, I think your idea to include board games could be a good direction. However, someone needs to be willing to start the game with them. Most kids will not take the initiative to read the directions. They can play many of the games online, and because of the prompts, kids tend to figure them out without reading directions.

Craft activities are hit or miss….The "Make a Difference" table is a great concept. Once the sorting of the donated items is complete, how would you keep the idea alive? Is there already a kid group in Cape that has this "mission"?

A big challenge is to incorporate activities that can capture the interest/abilities of kids ages 6-12.

When the weather permits, many kids want to go outside to play.

All that being said, I will need to limit my volunteer time to just Mondays for the time being. When I return the Monday after school vacation, Feb. 27th, do you have a board game available for the "board game" table. I'd like to maybe start with that?

[Note: this was our only volunteer--no high school students were interested, and because kids continued to not be engaged in any of our activities, our one adult volunteer stopped coming after about six weeks.]

To: Kyle
Fr: Rachel Davis
Re: Tween/Teen Services
Dt: Sat, Feb 18, 2017, 9:36 AM

Someone posted these questions to the ALSC [Association for Library Service to Children] listserv. I've pasted the answers so far--it is some good info that validates what we plan to do with YA services:

What age does your library consider tweens to be? generally we go with ages 9-12, or 4th-6th grade

What age does your library consider teens to be? 13 years and up

Do you serve tweens through children's services or teen services? children's services

If you have a Youth Services Manager and Adult Services Manager, which one oversees teen services? What age does that include? Right now, our teen librarian is housed in the youth services department, so desk coverage in the afternoon for the Teen Zone comes from youth services. All librarians, however, are instructed to get up and walk around, including adult librarians, during after school hours when we have larger crowds of tweens and teens. We have a middle school on the corner across from the public library.

[Lindenhurst Memorial Library, MA]

What age does your library consider tweens to be? Usually 9-11

What age does your library consider teens to be? This depends on which branch in our system. At my branch, our teen programs are for ages 12-17; some of our smaller branches will include 10-11 year olds in their teen programming.

Do you serve tweens through children's services or teen services? Our youth services staff serve children ages 0-18.

If you have a Youth Services Manager and Adult Services Manager, which one oversees teen services? What age does that include? We have neither, but our youth librarian would oversee teen services. Sometimes our adult services staff does programming for teens and adults, mainly crafts/maker programs.

[Clermont County Public Library, OH]

What age does your library consider tweens to be? ages 9-12, or 4th-6th grade

What age does your library consider teens to be? Ages 13 years to 18. Information Services handles ages 18 and up.

Do you serve tweens through children's services or teen services? Staff in teen services oversees the collection and programming; both teen and children's services are involved in serving teens.

If you have a Youth Services Manager and Adult Services Manager, which one oversees teen services? What age does that include? The Youth Services Manager oversees the services and works cooperatively with Information Services because much of the non-fiction and homework needs of teens are handled on the Information Services floor.

[Metropolitan Library System, OK]

To: [name redacted]
Fr: Kyle Neugebauer
Cc: Rachel Davis
Re: Afterschool concerns
Dt: May 18, 2017, at 10:15 AM

Hello,

My apologies for the slow response. Due to meetings and other scheduling issues today is the first day that both Rachel Davis, Children's Librarian, and myself have been in the Library.

We are very sorry to hear about the issues your daughter is having with other students. I will be reaching out to the assistant principal to consult with her on this matter.

We strive for the Library to be a welcoming place for all members of our community. The last thing we want is for anyone to not feel comfortable coming here. We take issues and incidents that occur at the Library very seriously, and I would encourage you and/or your daughter to let a Library staff member know of anything that comes up. Given our limited staffing, we are unable to monitor all areas of the Library where students gather so we rely on students to talk to us if something is going on. Going forward we will be doing further reevaluations of the After School Hangout in light of this and other issues that have been raised.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you.
Kyle Neugebauer

Reply

Hi Kyle and Rachel,
Thank you very much. We appreciate you working on differentiating between typical, and sometimes obnoxious, adolescent behavior versus hurtful behavior that rises to bullying. We also acknowledge that it's a challenge for separate institutions to work together and we are grateful that you are willing to do it. For kids, of course the boundaries don't matter when other kids behave inappropriately so your attempts to standardize and coordinate with the middle school is a powerful testament to your commitment to young people.

Thanks,

To: Thomas Memorial Library Staff
Fr: Rachel Davis
Re: Game controllers
Dt: Tue, Oct 10, 2017, 8:05 AM

Hello, everyone. Today is the day that we start checking out the game controllers for after school use. At meeting last week, the youth services staff and Kyle came up with the following additional changes that will go into effect today:

At 2:30, the back half of the Community Room will become in effect a second game room, but for the Wii only, and the same rules apply: no more than four people, controllers are checked out at the children's desk, and no food is allowed.

The rest of the Community Room will be set up with tables and chairs only for what we're calling "After School Social Hour" from 2:30 - 3:30. This is a place where kids, tweens, and teens can have their snacks and drinks for that hour. Any after schoolers with food or drinks should be directed to the Community Room. At 3:30, the room will either be closed up or turned over to after school programs.

At 2:30, the cart with the laptops and iPads will be wheeled into the children's room, and kids can sign them out as they did when they were in the Community Room with the understanding that the electronics do not leave the children's room. I had cleared the display space on the other side of the computers for kids to use with laptops, but Fran and Kiah's awesome Halloween display is now that space and has been getting a lot of attention from kids. We'll have to see how it goes with kids using the laptops at the back tables or other seating in the children's room without the additional space.

We'll also have to monitor how the space under the stairs gets used. Even when kids are not being inappropriately loud, their voices travel up the stairs, so we may need to designate that a quiet reading space or something. I usually explain to kids that their voices travel and ask them to try not to be loud. Perhaps we can make that our practice and see if we can keep things from getting out of hand.

Kyle will be around to help out this afternoon with this change in procedure. I'm off today, so please direct any questions or concerns about after school use to Kyle.

Thanks!

Rachel Davis <rdavis@thomas.lib.me.us>
Attachments
Tue, Nov 21, 2017, 10:38 AM
to Thomas

Beginning Monday, December 4, we are ditching the idea of "after school social hour" and "after school hangout" and instead focusing on actual programs. We have something every day after school for school-aged kids. The new schedule can be found on the attached flyer.

Rachel

Rachel Davis <rdavis@thomas.lib.me.us>
Tue, Nov 21, 2017, 3:50 PM
to Thomas

I keep getting parents looking at our after school schedule and complaining that the programs are all for older kids. Here are some things to communicate if you parents express similar concerns to you:

Our new slate of after school programs designed to accommodate the many kids who already come here directly after school. Or put another way, because we are overrun with older kids after school, that is who our programs are designed for. We don't have the ability to also accommodate younger kids at the same time, but we offer many programs throughout the year that are designed for younger grades.

We do offer Wednesday's Creativity Lab for elementary and middle school students. If parents complain that the program begins at 2:30 but Pond Cove doesn't get out until 3:00, please point out that it is a drop-in program that runs until 4:00. Middle schoolers get out at 2:30, and they can drop in to the program then; younger kids who want to participate can drop in when they get out of school and until 4:00 p.m.

I hope this is helpful.

Rachel

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Kyle will be around to help out this afternoon with this change in procedure. I'm off today, so please direct any questions or concerns about after school use to Kyle.

Thanks!

[Concerned parent]
May 20, 2017, 8:09 AM

Hi Kyle and Rachel,
Thank you very much. We appreciate you working on differentiating between typical, and sometimes obnoxious, adolescent behavior versus hurtful behavior that rises to bullying. We also acknowledge that it's a challenge for separate institutions to work together and we are grateful that you are willing to do it. For kids, of course the boundaries don't matter when other kids behave inappropriately so your attempts to standardize and coordinate with the middle school is a powerful testament to your commitment to young people.

Thanks,

On May 18, 2017, at 10:15 AM, Kyle Neugebauer <kneugebauer@thomas.lib.me.us> wrote:

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Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you.
Kyle Neugebauer