

Shops at Sunset Place: No unaccompanied visitors under 17 after 9 p.m.

- Beginning April 1, visitors 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult after 9 p.m.
- Adult supervisors must be at least 21-years-old, according to the new policy
- Underage guests are still free to enjoy late movies at AMC Sunset Place 24

BY ALEX BUTLER

Unsupervised teenagers will no longer swarm the Shops at Sunset Place at late hours.

In an effort to change its customer base and increase its adult and family clientele, the Shops at Sunset Place is enacting a youth supervision policy.

Beginning April 1, visitors 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult after 9 p.m. Adult supervisors must be at least 21-years-old.



“Mainly, what we are doing is listening to our shoppers and feedback we are getting from the community,” said Vicki Baisden, general manager of The Shops at Sunset Place. “What we have been doing at the Shops at Sunset Place is we have been introducing a lot of amenities to attract the adult community to the center. This is just part of that effort to answer the requests we are getting from our community. Frankly, most of our stores during the week close at 9 p.m. and on the weekends they close at 10 p.m.”

“Having the youth here past that hour really isn’t beneficial to them or the community. We want this to be a pleasant environment for our customers to come and sit in our beautiful new soft seating areas and enjoy our restaurants and our coffee shops and we are just making the common area accommodate that.”

Simon Property Group sold the 5701 Sunset Dr. property to Grass River Property and Federal Realty Investment Trust in October for \$110 million.

The policy applies to common areas and the parking garage. The new owners made the decision after collecting feedback from tenants, shoppers, surrounding businesses and local law enforcement.

Unsupervised visitors under 17 can still frequent shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues, but will be asked to leave the premises after 9 p.m.

Guests will utilize a covered youth pickup area designated near the center of the shops, between GNC and Aeropostale. Security can escort guests to the pickup area and help them contact parents or other means of transportation. Mall security and the South Miami Police Department will team to enforce the policy. Starting this weekend, the mall will have signage and security officers will walk around, handing out cards explaining the policy. The mall will do the policy outreach program until April 1.

“Sunset Place has the potential to become a lifestyle destination that brings together people from across the community, but there’s a perception that the center is overrun with underage visitors,” said Ruben Valdes, manager at Splitsville Lanes. “The new owners are serious about improving the physical experience and the customer mix in the evening, and I have every reason to think our customers at Splitsville will welcome these changes.”

In October, South Miami police implemented a full-time business district walking beat to improve safety in the area. The officer has cultivated relationships with guests, while keeping in contact with all of the merchants in the area.

“The head of Sunset Place, along with their security, reached out to us and said they wanted to put a curfew into effect. ...The goal is to have a safe place for them to go,” South Miami Police Chief Rene Landa said. “It’s not like they are going to toss kids into the street. What they want to do is for the safety of the kids in the mall to have a safe place.”

Landa said most crime in the mall occurs between 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Baisden said that she hasn’t heard concerns from vendors about profit loss. She added that underage guests are still free to enjoy late movies AMC Sunset Place 24.

“Again, the only thing that really is open after the curfew is the restaurants and bars, but most people wouldn’t want their child in a restaurant or bar late at night anyway, and the movie theater,” Baisden said. “And if the youth come and say they are going to a movie and have a ticket, they can walk to the movie theater and go see that movie, and when they come out they can meet their parents here to pick them up. We aren’t saying you can’t see a movie at 9 or

10.”

Aventura Mall has a similar policy. The Shops at Sunset Place have also added new landscaping, lighting in the center and along Sunset Drive, and upgraded escalators and elevators.

The mall features 408,000 square feet of retail space, 107,000 square feet of office space, and a 1,700 space parking garage. The mall is open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. It is open from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Sundays.

“We always have South Miami Police Department officers on the property,” Baisden said. “So after 9 p.m. we will ask them to go to the pick up area to call their parents to come and pick them up and if they don’t want to call their parents, the police will be there and try to get ahold of their parents. But if they decide to leave the property, we most certainly wouldn’t stop them in any way. We can’t hold people. We just want to offer our families that shop here at the mall a safe place they can come. We will have SMPD there to make sure they are safe and it is a pleasant environment.”