

## **Unattended Children Policy**

***Amended and Approved 6/8/05***

The Merrimac Public Library welcomes children of all ages to use and enjoy the facilities, collections and programs offered by the library. The library attempts to provide a safe environment for children to select books and other materials, and participate in library programs.

To enable the library staff to promote use and access while insuring the safety of Children's Room users, the library has established the following policies:

- All children 8 years old and younger must be accompanied by a parent or other adult who is responsible for the child.
- At the discretion of a responsible adult, a child age nine or older may be left unattended for the period of time needed to select materials, complete a homework assignment, or attend a program. The child must know how to reach the responsible adult in case this need should arise. Children should not be left for more than a two hour period of time.
- Children and their adult caregivers should be aware of the closing times of the library. Children should be picked up 10 minutes prior to the library closing. The library will call the Police to escort children who have been left at the library after closing hours.
- The parent/guardian is responsible for insuring appropriate behavior of their children in the library. We will ask disruptive children to leave the building. In the case of unaccompanied children under 12 years old, a parent/guardian will be called to pick them up.
- Children should not bring food or beverages to be consumed in the Children's Room. The exception is when food is served as part of a Children's Room program or celebration.
- Children should dress appropriately in the library. In addition to basic clothing (top and bottom) shoes must be worn.
- Online PAC terminals in the Children's Room and throughout the library building are not intended for use by children age 5 or under. It is the responsibility of a parent or caregiver to ensure appropriate use of the online terminals and other electronic library resources by young children. Pounding on keyboards and other potentially damaging activities are not permitted.