

## **Mendham Borough Library Unattended Children Policy**

At the Mendham Borough Library the safety of children is a serious concern. Young children need to feel safe and secure and may require the presence of an adult or caregiver.

An unattended child is a child of any age who is apparently unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver. Children who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves may not be left alone in the library or on library grounds at any time and must have adequate supervision from a caregiver.

### Children Participating in Library Programs

Children under the age of 5 must be accompanied by a parent at all times. Children age 5 to 9 years old must be signed in by a caregiver and a phone number where the caregiver can be reached must be left at the library. Children ages 10 and over participating in library programs must sign be signed up by a parent or caregiver and provide contact information for the parent or caregiver in order for the child to participate.

### Children Not Participating in Library Programs

Children under the age of **10** may not be left unattended by an adult at any time in any part of the library. If children under the age of **10** are found without an adult, staff will attempt to locate the parent or caregiver.

Children ages **10 to 12** are welcome to use the library unattended, but should not be left alone for extended periods of time. All children should have the phone number of a parent or caregiver with them. The staff will be the best judge of the appropriate time periods for each child. The library is a public place and the library cannot guarantee the safety of children. Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children. If a child becomes anxious or disruptive, the staff will attempt to find the parent or caregiver in the library. If a parent or caregiver is not in the library, staff will call the child's contact number. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to be accessible to pick up the child at any time.

If an unattended child **of any age** is behaving in a manner that is disruptive or interferes with the operation or use of the library, that child's parents or caregiver will be notified, and they will be asked to remove the child from the library immediately. If they cannot be located or refuse to do so, the local police will be called.

When unattended children are present at the library at closing time, staff will notify the parent or caregiver. If a parent or caregiver cannot be reached, local police may be called. Under no circumstances will staff transport the child from the library building.

In accordance with NJSA 2A:53A-14,15 Negligence, the following conditions will be observed: Parents have responsibility for the conduct of their children. A parent, guardian or other person having legal custody of a child under age 18 years of age, who fails or neglects to exercise reasonable supervision and control of the conduct of the child, shall be liable in a civil action for any willful, malicious or unlawful injury or destruction by such child of the property of the library.