



# CHILDREN'S POLICY

(endorsed by STRL Committee 18 Aug 2005)

The Southern Tablelands Regional Library is committed to serving the information and recreation needs of young people. The Library strives to provide a welcoming environment, and provides targeted resources and programs to meet the needs of young people in our community. The Library's services to young people include:

- Fiction, nonfiction and recreational books
- Magazines
- Computer games
- CDs
- Videos/DVDs
- Internet/pc access
- Assistance from specialist and general staff in accessing collections and information
- Homework help
- Pre-school storytime
- Space for activities and study
- Tailored programs and activities especially relevant to young people

## Access to Resources

The Library exercises no limitation on access to publications classified *Unrestricted* under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*.

The Library has no censorship role in its choice of the library resources that form the collection.

Parents/carers are responsible for monitoring their child's selection and use of library resources. The library encourages parents/carers to set their own family rules in consultation with their child.

The Library promotes and supports public access to information. Library staff are available to assist clients in the use of the Internet, and to recommend websites on particular subjects. A number of appropriate websites have been selected for inclusion in the Library's electronic collections.

Parents/carers are responsible for their child's use of the Internet, in line with the Library's Internet Policy.

## Unattended Children

Unsupervised children can be at risk in any public place, including public libraries. Library staff do not supervise children in the library, so there is a risk that unattended children may leave the library at any time, hurt themselves, or be approached by strangers. Libraries are busy public places, open to all, and staff cannot judge which members of the public present a possible danger to children. In addition, libraries do not have the facilities to attend to children who are sick, injured or hungry.

Young children left alone in a library can become distressed, bored or disruptive. Library users, including young people, who disturb other library users may be removed from the Library under the Library Act 1939.

A child left unattended in a public library may be classed as a child or young person at risk of harm under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, s23, and subsequently may be reported as such to the Department of Community Services under s24 or s27 of the Act.

Parents who leave a child unattended in a public library are exposing their child to potential harm, and may themselves be committing an offence under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, s228