

Public Internet Access Policy

Public access to the Internet is available to all Ocean City Free Public Library cardholders on computers in the Computer Center located on the second floor of the Library as well as through the library's wireless network. The Library is making the Internet available to the public as an informational, educational, recreational, and cultural resource in support of our role as this community's information and learning center.

As part of our mission and the professional principles of librarianship, this Internet Use Policy affirms the protection of First Amendment rights, intellectual freedom, equity of access, confidentiality of information about users and their use of all library resources, including electronic and individual, responsibility.

The Library does not endorse the viewpoints or vouch for the accuracy or authenticity of information found on the Internet. It is left to each user to determine what information is appropriate. Some or all of the resources on the internet may be unavailable at any time. Although many sources are free, the Library does not provide fees for web sites or services that charge a fee. Users must access these pay services using their own resources and at their own risk.

FILTERING SOFTWARE

Since the Internet is an unregulated medium, it enables access to some material that may be offensive, disturbing, and or illegal, as well as materials that are personally, professionally, and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages. The Library adheres to the standards of the Children's Internet protection Act and provides filtered access on all computers and the wireless network. The filter helps protect from phishing scams, botnets and malware as well as block pornography and inappropriate content. The Library can't guarantee the filter's effectiveness and it is possible that users may access information that they find inappropriate.

If a user feels that an appropriate site has been blocked they can report this to the staff member on duty in the computer center who will review the site and make a judgment on providing access to the site.

Library staff will make every effort to guide users to sources on the Internet. The Library cannot be held liable for offensive sites that may be found on the Internet. Due to the sheer wealth of information on the Internet, librarians are not able to evaluate sites according to principles applied to collection development. Library personnel do not monitor or supervise Internet access except for the length of time of use and to ensure system uptime and availability. Users are encouraged to evaluate the validity of information accessed via the Internet. The Library assumes no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from connections to the Internet. Users are cautioned that, because security in an electronic environment such as the Internet cannot be guaranteed, all transaction files, and communications are vulnerable to unauthorized access and use and, therefore, should be considered public. Since, the Library computers for Internet access are located in public areas which must be shared by Library users of all ages, backgrounds, and sensibilities, individuals are advised to consider this when accessing potentially controversial information and images. **The Library reserves the right to end an Internet session at any time if it is creating a disturbance. Any user who is found to be causing a disturbance will be reminded of the library's policy and told that they will lose their Internet access privilege the next time this occurs.**

The Ocean City Free Public Library prohibits the following:

Sending, receiving or displaying obscene or pornographic text or graphics inappropriate for a public and open environment.

- **Engaging in any activity that facilitates sending, receiving or displaying inappropriate materials to a minor.**
- **Activities that disrupt the library or its network.**
- **Loading or downloading software from the Internet or using personal software programs on the library's computers.**
- **Making any attempt to modify, gain access to files, passwords or data belonging to others, seeking unauthorized access to the library's or any other computer system or damaging or altering software components of any network or database.**

The library has the right to suspend or terminate a user's access to the Internet as a result of any such disturbance. Punishment will be determined by the following procedures: Any user who is found to be causing any above disturbance will be reminded of the library's policy and told that they will lose their privilege the next time this occurs.

COMPLIANCE WITH LIBRARY POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Violation of the policies and regulations that govern the use of the library's Internet resources may result in suspension or loss of privilege to use these resources. Illegal activity involving the Library's Internet resources will be subject to prosecution by the appropriate authorities.

WARNING: Software and information downloaded from any sources including the Internet may contain computer viruses or other malicious software. The Library has installed a virus checker on its computers; however, this will not completely protect users from getting viruses and other malicious software. Patrons are advised to have virus-checking software on their computers.

The Ocean City Free Public Library is not responsible for damage to a patron's flash drive or computer, or for any loss of data, damage, or liability that may occur from use of the Library's computers.

USER RESPONSIBILITIES

All users of the Internet are expected to use this Library resource in a responsible and courteous manner, and to follow all Internet-related rules, regulations, and procedures established for its use, including, but not limited to, those of the Library. Responsible, courteous use of the Internet includes:

- Recognizing that the Internet, like all of the Library's information sources, must be shared and used in a manner which respects the rights of others and refrains from activity that prevents others from using it.
- Using the Library's Internet resources for educational, informational, and recreational purposes only.
- Refraining from using the Library's Internet resources to conduct a business or commercial enterprise, or from engaging in commercial activity such as the distribution of advertising.
- Not engaging in illegal or unethical use of the Internet.
- Respecting intellectual property rights by making only authorized copies of copyrighted, licensed, or otherwise-controlled software or data residing on the Internet.

- Respecting the privacy of others by not misrepresenting oneself as another user; by not attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords, or data belonging to others; and by not seeking disallowed access to any computer system via the Internet.
- Refraining from damaging or altering the setup of the equipment used to access the Internet at the Library.
- Refraining from altering or damaging software or data residing on the Internet.
- Refraining from the deliberate propagation of computer worms, viruses, spyware and any other form of malicious software.
- Refraining from the transmission of threatening, harassing, or abusive language and images.

CHILD SAFETY ON THE INTERNET

Responsibility for, and any restrictions of, a child's use of the Internet rests solely with his or her parents or legal guardians. Parents or guardians, NOT the Library or its staff, are responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their children. Parental supervision of children searching the Internet is encouraged.

To assist parents, the Library has available in print form the pamphlet, "Child Safety on the Information Highway", published by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The pamphlet includes, "Guidelines for Parents", and "My Rules for Online Safety". Parents are encouraged to review this information with their children. Librarians will make a copy of that pamphlet available to parents, children, and all others upon request (printed from the websites located at safekids.com & safeteens.com).

Approved by Library Board of Trustees 02/21/2006

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