

MONROE PUBLIC LIBRARY — COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE POLICY

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I. MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Monroe Public Library (also referred to as Library) is to make freely available to each area resident a selection of materials and services needed or desired by that resident for the purposes of education, recreation, and the acquisition of knowledge.

The Internet is made available as an informational and educational resource in support of the Monroe Public Library mission. The Library strives to serve people of all ages at all levels of need and considers its endorsement of the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read documents to apply to the use of electronic information. The Library also upholds public access to information in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the United States.

II. DISCLAIMER

The Internet offers access to ideas, information and commentary from around the world that can be personally, professionally and culturally enriching. However, not all sources on the Internet are accurate, complete, or up-to-date. It is possible that individuals might access information that they find personally offensive or disturbing. The Internet is a global entity that does not fall under the control or governance of any single agency, government, or organization. The availability of networked information via Library terminals does not constitute endorsement of that information by the Library. The Library does not warrant information found on the internet to be accurate, authoritative, factual, timely or useful for patrons' purposes. If any patron believes that information obtained via the Library terminals is inaccurate or offensive, the patron should contact the original producer or distributor of the information.

The Library does not select the material on the Internet and has no means or statutory authority to assure that only constitutionally protected material is available on the Internet. The authority to determine what is illegal content rests with the courts as defined in Wisconsin and federal statutes.

Access, use, or dissemination of information via the Internet in the Library is the responsibility of the user. In the case of minors, it is a joint responsibility of the user and the parent or guardian. Because parents or guardians may feel that information available through the Internet is not suitable for viewing by the children in their care, parental or guardian supervision of children is advised regarding the child's use of the Internet and the child's potential viewing of material accessed by other patrons.

III. RESPONSIBILITY OF USERS

Users should evaluate Internet sources just as they do other electronic or print materials, questioning the accuracy and completeness of the information. Users must use the Internet at their own risk, realizing that they may encounter material they may find offensive.

IV. SUPERVISING CHILDREN'S USE

A public library, unlike schools, does not serve *in loco parentis* (in place of a parent). Librarians cannot act in place of parents providing constant care and supervision of children as they explore the Internet. Monroe Public Library supports the right for each family to decide what appropriate Internet use is for their children. The responsibility for what minors read or view on the Internet rests with parents or guardians.

The following are recommended guidelines for parents and guardians to ensure that children have positive online experiences, whether at home or in the Library.

1. Use the Internet as a family. Join your children in Internet exploration.
2. Explore the wide range of available information and tell your children about sites you consider inappropriate for them.
3. Encourage children to use sites on the Library homepage or and counsel them to avoid sites you as a parent or legal guardian consider unsuitable.
4. Provide guidelines for your children on the amount of time they spend online, just as for television viewing.
5. Instruct children NEVER to give out personal information (name, address, password, telephone number, credit card number) online.
6. Provide children with guidelines on acceptable use of electronic resources, including email and chat rooms.
7. Teach children to be good information consumers and to consider the source, date, and accuracy of information presented in all available formats, including online, print, and other formats.

V. SCHEDULING AND USING LIBRARY COMPUTERS WITH FULL INTERNET ACCESS

Library computers are available only during open Library hours. Library computers other than Computers designated for integrated catalog use may be scheduled for use by those with a library card from any member library of the South Central Library System in three ways: 1) by calling the Library Information/Reference Desk during normal Library hours and asking that a computer be scheduled for your use, 2) by stopping by the Information/Reference Desk during normal Library hours and asking a Library staff member to schedule a computer for your use; and 3) by scheduling a computer for your use from outside the Library through Library Online (Telus), the Library time management program, from 7:00 AM-3:00 AM 7 days per week. Printed guides to using the Library's online time management program to reserve a computer are available at the Reference/Information Desk on the 1 floor and at the Children's Service Desk on the 2 floor Librarians are available during normal Library hours to assist patrons as needed in using Library Online and in accessing computer programs and the Internet.

Users of Library computers with full Internet access who are seven years or younger must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, caretaker, or sibling over 12 years of age to use an Internet computer. This restriction does not apply to the use of the Library integrated catalog computers that provide online access to collections and databases and limited other information that is shared by South Central Library System member libraries.

The Library offers computers for varied uses, including research, recreation, email communications, and individual generation of documents or other materials. In an effort to make computers readily available to as many patrons as possible and to facilitate meeting the greatest possible diversity of needs and interests, the Library designates computers for different uses and may allocate different periods of time for use of computer stations.

Adults and young adults who are 14 or older or in 9th grade or above may use 1st floor Internet stations with desktop computers and may also check out Library owned laptop computers with wireless Internet capability. Library laptops may not be checked out by children and youth under 14 years of age or who are not yet in 9th grade unless accompanied by a parent, guardian, or-authorized teacher or authorized caretaker.

Desktop computers designated for use by those under 14 years of age or who are not yet in 9th grade are available on the 2nd floor in the Children's Area. In addition to the age eligibility requirements stated in this policy, all patrons regardless of age must meet the following eligibility requirements to use *Library Internet access computers:

- a. Have under \$10 of unpaid fines
- b. Be free of an active suspension regarding use of the Library, Library Internet computers, or the Library Internet wireless connectivity. *Guidelines and penalties for unacceptable use of Library computers or Internet service are given on page 4 and 5 of this policy.

Computers designated for the use of children and youth under 14 years of age or in grades below 9th grade, may be made for patrons who are either temporarily or permanently responsible for a child according to applicable legal guidelines. These exceptions will apply in the following circumstances:

- a. The patron is using the same computer as a child for which he/she is responsible and is supervising;
- b. The patron is using an available computer directly beside the child that he/she is supervising *and* no other child or youth under 14 years who is eligible to use the computer according to Library policies has asked a library staff member to use the computer. In the event that such a request is made, the adult patron will immediately relinquish the computer when asked by the staff person to do so. The adult or youth over 14 may still share a computer with the child for whom he or she is responsible.

VI. TIME AND SPACE ALLOCATIONS FOR USE OF LIBRARY COMPUTER INTERNET STATIONS:

VI. A Time Allocations:

Desktop Internet access computers on the 1 floor may be reserved for two hour sessions during Library open hours. In addition, the Quick Check station may be used for 15 minutes for 3 sessions during Library open hours, with the understanding that the patron will allow at least 1 hour to pass between the 3 sessions. Thus, the total time allocation for each patron using the 1st floor computers during one day of Library open hours is 2 hours and 45 minutes.

All Internet public access computer stations with PCs on the 2nd floor that are designated for the use of children may be reserved for 30 minutes for one session per day. Exceptions to the amount of time that an individual patron may use a computer on the 2 floor may be made at the discretion of Youth Services

Staff provided that a computer is needed for school, public service project work, or for communication matters that the Youth Services Staff judges to be sufficiently time sensitive to justify additional computer time.

Desktop time allocation is not applicable to the use of Library laptop computers. Library laptops may be used for at least 1 hour and continuously thereafter throughout normal Library hours for the day provided no one else is waiting to use them. Areas may be designated areas for use of Library laptops and for visitors who bring their laptops or other online devices to the Library for use with the Library wireless network by signage or by Information/Reference staff, Youth Services staff, or a Librarian assigned to act as Building Librarian.

At the present time and for an approximately 1 year period from the time of the present policy amendments, a laptop computer is placed in the Children's area on a trial basis for checkout to children. The same time qualifications pertaining to use that applies to other online public access stations in the Children's Room apply to the use of the laptop, with the exception of time allocation. The laptop computer in the Children's Room is available for use for at least a 1 hour period and may be used indefinitely if no one is waiting to use it. The Youth Services Librarian and the Library Director will assess in 2010 whether requests for the laptop by individual patrons and the children for which they are responsible warrants storing the laptop computer in the Youth Services area rather than downstairs with other laptops.

VI. B. Space Allocations

The areas designated on the *first* floor will include public areas near the Information/Reference Desk unless unusual conditions warrant the Director or a Librarian assigned as Building Librarian to temporarily disallow use of this area for wireless use. Such considerations may include, for example, building or electrical conditions or special events involving patrons and staff. In addition, groups who have scheduled the first floor meeting room' in accordance with Library meeting room policy and Library staff and those involved in meetings or programs with Library staff may use Library wireless connectivity in the meeting room.

Normally, the following areas on the 1st floor will not be available for wireless use: the Ronald Aebly Periodical Room; the first floor meeting room by individuals who have not reserved the room; the 3 small study rooms; and stack areas used to shelve print or AV materials. Information/Reference staff, a Building Librarian, or the Director may make an exception and allow use of wireless operated equipment in one or more of the normally excluded areas if circumstances warrant the exception. Examples of such circumstances are special programs or events requiring online access in the areas not normally designated for that purpose; unusually crowded conditions in the area designated for wireless access due to unforeseeable reasons; need for a quiet place for studying online, taking online tests, or tutoring.

Library laptops that are checked out at the 1st floor Reference/Information Desk to patrons 14 years and older are normally to be used only in designated areas on the 1st floor may be made by staff for the following uses:

- Tutors or Teachers for use with students on the 2nd floor
- Parents or guardians for use with children on the 2nd floor
- Participants in the programs that have been scheduled at the library for which laptop computers are needed

Patrons using library laptops on the 2nd floor under the preceding circumstances should use them in the following locations on the 2nd floor.

- The foreign language area near the adult genre collections
- Chairs or tables normally placed near the Teen Place
- Tables normally placed near the regular or genre adult fiction collections
- Meeting Room or other space for which a program and laptops have been scheduled

Patrons checking out laptops for use in the Children's Room should use library laptops in the Children's Room as designated by Youth Services Staff.

VII. LEGAL AND ACCEPTABLE USES

The library's computers may be used only for legal purposes. Users of all ages must abide by the following restrictions. Users confirm agreement with these guidelines on each PC computer when logging in and in written form for using laptop computers.

Unacceptable uses include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Transmitting of threatening or harassing materials;
2. Libeling, slandering or maliciously offending other users;
3. Disrespecting the privacy of others by misrepresenting oneself as another user;
4. Attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords, or data belonging to others;
5. Attempting to crash, degrade performance of or gain unauthorized access to the library's computer systems and networks;
6. Modifying or damaging equipment, software or data belonging to the library or other users;
7. Exposing children to harmful materials. *Sec. 948.11 of the Wisconsin Statutes*, among other things, makes it a crime to expose children to pictures or images of nudity, sexually explicit conduct, or physical torture or brutality that appeal to the prurient, shameful or morbid interests of children, are patently offensive to prevailing adult standards regarding materials suitable for children, or lack serious literary, artistic, political, scientific or educational value for children.
8. Displaying graphic materials that may be disturbing to others.

These restrictions also apply in email and chat room environments accessed through library computers. If an individual or group of Internet users creates a disturbance that limits the effective use of the library by others, they will be asked to correct their behavior, disband, and/or leave the building as appropriate.

VIII. PENALTY GUIDELINES FOR UNACCEPTABLE USE OF PUBLIC ACCESS COMPUTERS WITNESSED BY LIBRARY STAFF MEMBERS:

Penalties will normally follow the steps given below. However, behavior may be judged by the director or designee to warrant an action other than that stated in the normal progression.

1. The patron(s) will be asked by the witnessing staff member to immediately correct the behavior or activity and will be warned that if the behavior or activity is repeated that this

- could lead to a suspension of computer and library use privileges.
2. If unacceptable behavior or activity recurs during the same day the patron(s)' computer and library privileges may be suspended for the remainder of the day. In the event of a suspension, the witnessing staff member will obtain the patron(s) name, contact information and library barcode number if possible. As soon as possible after the suspension, the staff member will write an incident report and provide it to the library director or *the librarian acting in the director's stead*.
 3. If an unacceptable behavior or activity is performed by the patron(s) after a one day suspension, the witnessing library staff member will notify the library director or the person acting in the library director's stead. The library director and witnessing staff member may instruct the patron(s) that computer and library privileges are suspended for a period of 1 month. The staff member will then acquire patron information and fill out an incident report as given in step 2. *Note:* At any time during the 1 month suspension, the patron may appeal the suspension by submitting a written request to the director. The director and at least one board member will review the appeal within a period of 1 week of receiving the request and make a decision regarding whether the suspension is to be continued for the suspension duration.
 4. A patron who completes a 1 month suspension and again uses library equipment in an unacceptable manner may be suspended for a period of not less than 1 year and may have privileges reinstated after one year provided that (a) a written request for reinstatement is submitted to the library director to be brought before the board, and (b) the board judges after a review of the previous incidents that full or partial library or computer use privileges are to be reinstated. The director will submit the appeal to the board at the next regular board meeting following the request. *Note:* In addition to the option to appeal at the end of 1 year, the patron may appeal the director's decision to the board at any time *during* the 1 year period. This request must be in writing and given to the director for submission to the board. The director, on receiving a written request for appeal of a 1 year suspension, will submit the appeal to the board at the next regular library board meeting.

Note: Records of suspensions under 4 above will be permanently retained. Records of all other suspensions will be retained for at least a 1 year period and will remain active for purposes of considering further penalty progression for at least 1 year following any period of suspension.

IX. COPYRIGHT

U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17 US Code) prohibits the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of copyrighted materials, except as permitted by the principles of fair use. Users may not copy or distribute electronic materials, including electronic mail, text, images, programs or data, without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. Any responsibility for the consequences of copyright infringement lies with the user. The library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility resulting from such use. The library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility arising from access to or use of information obtained through its electronic systems, or any consequences thereof.

X. REEVALUATION OF PUBLIC ACCESS COMPUTER POLICY

This policy will be reviewed as needed and on an annual basis.