

OCONEE REGIONAL LIBRARY

COMPUTER & INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Approved by the Oconee Regional Library Board, February 2016

Purpose

The Oconee Regional Library Board of Trustees supports the idea that all members of the community have free and equal access to the entire range of library resources regardless of content, approach, format or amount of detail. These rights extend to all users of the public library.

These rights are balanced by 1) the Library's responsibility to abide by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and Georgia Code (§20-5-5), which requires public libraries to provide content filtering on public access computers and internet service, and 2) the Library's desire to support the right and responsibility of parent and legal guardians to monitor their minor children's access to library materials and services.

User Agreement

In using this Service, users understand and accept:

- To use this Service is to do so at their own risk.
- Library computers, internet, and related equipment and services, are neither private nor secure.
- The Library shall have no liability for direct, indirect or consequential damages related to the use of this Service. To the fullest extent permitted, by applicable law, the Library expressly disclaims all guarantees, warranties and conditions of any kind, whether express or implied, regarding this service or any information, services or materials accessed through this service.
- Users shall respect the privacy of other users and shall refrain from attempting to view or read material being used by others, as well as to censor or comment on what others are viewing.
- Users shall make every effort to not disrupt or disturb others next to them or elsewhere in the Library.
- The screens of library computer and personally-owned devices shall always be considered visible by children. Appropriate local, state and federal laws concerning the display of materials harmful to minors will be strictly enforced.
- Misuse of the Library's computers or internet service will result in the loss of computer privileges, potential loss of library privileges and possible prosecution. Such misuse includes, but is not limited to, using the computer for 1) illegal activities, 2) accessing or transmitting illegal materials, materials which by local community standards would be obscene, or materials harmful to minors; 3) damaging or attempting to damage computer equipment or software; 4) interfering with systems operations, integrity or security; 5) gaining unauthorized access to any computer network or files; 6) sending harassing messages; 7) violating copyright laws and/or software licensing agreements; 8) initiating excessively high volume data transfers, such as those which, in the view of authorized library staff, risk consuming bandwidth to the detriment of other users.
- The Library may cooperate with legal authorities in the investigation of any suspected or alleged crime or civil wrong.
- The Library abides by Georgia Code (§24.9.46) which defines the confidential nature of certain library records.

Rules Governing Access

- Users shall present their PINES library card or valid picture ID to access public computers, except for specially-designated computers, if available at the facility, such as library catalogs and children's computers. Georgia residents must specifically present their active PINES library card in good standing for access. However, member libraries may create and post local guidelines governing exceptions to this requirement to offer some limited access.
- Users shall sign up in person to use a computer on a "next available station" basis. Stations may not be "reserved" for other persons and will not be held for persons who are not in the immediate vicinity. Telephone reservations will not be taken.
- Computer sessions may be limited to 30 minutes, unless no one is waiting. Member libraries shall create and post local guidelines regarding the maximum amount of time, maximum number of sessions and other factors affecting computer sessions to ensure equitable access based on facility-specific demand and resources.
- Users must end their session and leave the station when asked to do so by Library staff.
- In the interest of providing services to the maximum number of patrons, the number of computer sessions available per day, per user, may be limited by the staff person in charge. At times, users needing computer access for educational or vocational purposes shall have priority over users needing computers for recreational purposes. Such limitations will be dependent on facility-specific demand and computer availability as determined by library staff.
- The staff person in charge may limit the number of people at each computer.
- Prompt payment is required of users who incur charges for printing or other authorized fees.

Filtering

The Library does not review or exercise any control over the content or materials made available over the Internet by third parties. However, in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and Georgia Code (§20-5-5), the Library uses filtering/blocking technology on all public access computers and internet service. Under the law, adult patrons (ages 17 and older, as defined by CIPA) can request an unfiltered session on one of the Library's public access computers for bona fide research or other lawful purpose. Adult patrons can also request that erroneously blocked websites be unblocked by submitting an *Improperly Blocked Internet Site Form*, which will begin the process. Requesting adults need not explain why they wish to disable the filter or unblock a particular website.

The Library may remove, block, filter, or restrict by any other means any materials that, in the Library's sole discretion, may be illegal, may subject the library to liability, or may violate this Acceptable Use Policy.

Access by Minors / Responsibility of Parents and Legal Guardians

The Library upholds and affirms the right and responsibility of parents and legal guardians to determine what materials, information and services are or are not appropriate for their minor children to view or access. The Library is not responsible for a minor's selection of library materials or use of the internet and other services. Parents, legal guardians or caregivers are responsible for accompanying their minor children in the use of the Library if they wish to restrict their child's use of services and collections.

Parents and legal guardians:

- Accept responsibility for the following: 1) the safety and security of minors when using email, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communications; 2) unauthorized access, including “hacking” and other unlawful activities by minors online; 3) unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information concerning minors; 4) measures designed to restrict minors’ access to materials “harmful to minors” as currently defined by law.
- Accept that the Library cannot restrict minor access to wireless internet service, and therefore, accept responsibility for a minor’s access and use of any wireless device that is not provided by the Library.
- Must sign a Computer Use Registration Form, to be kept on file by the Library, for any minor under the age 15 to use the library computers without a parent present, excluding specifically-designated children’s computers or library catalogs, when available in a facility. Parents/guardians may revoke this written permission by notifying library staff.
- Must notify library staff if they want to restrict their 15 or 16 year old minor’s access to library computers, excluding specifically-designated children’s computers or library catalogs, when available in a facility. Otherwise, 15 or 16 years old minors shall be allowed access without written parental/guardian permission on file.

For minors who violate the Library’s computer use policies, the Regional Director or authorized library personnel may choose to contact parents or guardians, if necessary.

Library staff shall make available information resources to help parents/guardians educate themselves and their children about internet safety for minors.

Termination or Prohibition of Access

Branch Managers, Department Heads, or in their absence, a designated library employee are authorized to terminate any user’s computer or internet session, or to prohibit a user from subsequent computer sessions for up to two weeks from the date of informing the user of that action, given cause to believe that the user has violated this policy.

Conviction of illegal activities and/or misuse of this Service will result in immediate and permanent loss of computer use privileges. It may result in similar loss of all internet access privileges. For less severe violations, a patron will receive a warning for a first offense; a second offense will result in a temporary loss of privileges to this Service for a period of two weeks; a third offense will result in a loss of privileges to this Service, the length of which shall be determined by the Regional Director, with a minimum period of 3 months, up to a permanent loss of privileges.

Review of Permanent Record

If a patron has been permanently barred from this Service, they may appeal in writing to the Regional Director once every 2 years. The prohibition may be extended or suspended upon decision of the Regional Director.

Definitions:

“Minor” for purposes of CIPA is a person under 17 years of age pursuant to 47 U.S.C.A 254(h) (7) (D).

“Harmful to minors” as defined in 47 U.S.C.A 254(h) (7) (G).

“Inappropriate matter” for minors is material that is obscene as defined under Georgia law (O.C.G.A. 16-12-80)

“Child pornography” is defined under federal and state law (18 U.S.C. 2256; O.C.G.A. 16-12-100)