

Portage Public Library

PUBLIC COMPUTER USE POLICY

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I Purpose of the Policy

- (A) The Portage Public Library strives to provide equal and fair access to its resources for all people. To ensure equal and fair access is provided, it is necessary to have a public computer use policy.
- (B) The library provides public access to the Internet. This policy defines the relationship and responsibilities of the library and patrons regarding the Internet.
- (C) This policy is used by library staff to determine acceptable uses of the computer and Internet access the library provides for its patrons. This applies all computers that access the Internet on the Portage Public Library's network, i.e., both library-owned and personal equipment.

II Access to the Public Use Computers

- (A) To use the public computers, a patron must have a library card and know the PIN (personal identification number) for his/her account. Alternatively, if a patron is visiting, he/she must present a valid photo ID to receive a temporary Internet card. Staff may provide patrons with their card numbers and reset their PINs on occasion when they forget their library card if they present a valid photo ID. However, abuse of this courtesy will not be tolerated as patrons are encouraged to bring their library cards.
- (B) Computer use is incremented in 30-minute sessions. An additional 30-minute session may be used if no other patron is waiting for a computer. Additional time or longer continuous sessions are not allowed unless approved by the supervising librarian.
- (C) Computers are available during regular operating hours until 10 minutes before the library closes. Unreserved computers are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Patrons may make reservations up to seven (7) days in advance. Reservations may be made in person, over the telephone, or by using the online reservation software available on the library web site. Patrons have a 10-minute window to log in to their scheduled reservation. After 10 minutes, the computer reservation will be canceled and the computer will be open for other patrons to use. After two (2) no-shows in a seven (7) day period, a patron will receive a warning. After five (5)

no-shows in a fourteen (14) day period, the patron's computer privileges will be suspended. To avoid suspension, patrons should cancel reservations they will not use.

- (D) There is a limit of one (1) person per workstation. Any deviation from this limit must be approved by the supervising librarian.
- (E) Patrons are expected to surrender the use of the computer when their scheduled time expires and/or when library staff so request.
- (F) Users seven (7) years old and younger must be accompanied by a parent/guardian, caregiver, or sibling at least twelve (12) years old to use a computer.

III Rules for Using Computers in the Library

- (A) Patrons should save all information on personal removable media (disks, memory sticks, flash drives, saving to e-mail accounts, etc.). Hard drives on library computers are automatically cleared at the end of each session.
- (B) Inappropriate computer use, whether the computer belongs to the library or the patron, will not be tolerated within the Library. The Library will take disciplinary measures including but not limited to discontinued computer service or loss of library privileges. Illegal uses of computers may also be subject to prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities. Rules regarding inappropriate computer use include but are not limited to the following:
 1. Patrons shall not send, receive, or display on computer screens any text or graphics that may reasonably be construed to be obscene. Portage Public Library will notify and fully cooperate with law enforcement if it becomes aware of any use of its services to any connection with child pornography, exposure of sexually explicit material to children, or the solicitation of sex with minors.
 2. Patrons shall not transmit, post, upload, or otherwise make available defamatory, harassing, abusive, or threatening material or language that encourages bodily harm, destruction of property, or harasses another.
 3. Patrons shall not libel, slander, or maliciously offend other users.
 4. Patrons must respect the privacy of others and shall not misrepresent oneself as another user. This includes logging in with another patron's library card account. Patrons shall not send unsolicited bulk and/or commercial messages over the Internet or engage in activities that invade another's privacy, nor shall patrons forge or misrepresent message headers, whether in whole or in part, to mask the originator of the message.
 5. Patrons shall not attempt to crash, degrade performance of, damage, modify, or gain unauthorized access to computer systems and networks, hardware, software, files, passwords, or data that belongs to the library or other users.

- (C) If an individual or group of computer users creates a disturbance that limits the effective use of the library by others, he/she will be asked to correct the behavior, disband, and/or leave the building as appropriate.
- (D) The Portage Public Library will not be responsible for injuries or damages to possessions of individuals or groups resulting from the use of the computer. This includes credit card charges, identity theft, or other potential damages that are possible when using networked computers.
- (E) Printouts will be charged at \$0.10 per page. Printing access is not possible through the wireless network.
- (F) The Library is not responsible for patrons who use the library computers to engage in any activity that infringes or misappropriates the intellectual property rights of others, including patents, copyrights, trademarks, service marks, trade secrets, or any other proprietary right of any third party. Any responsibility for the consequences of intellectual property infringement lies with the user.
- (G) Access, use, or dissemination of information via the Internet in the Library is the responsibility of the user. The Library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility resulting from such use arising from access to or use of information obtained through its electronic information systems, or any consequences thereof.
- (H) Computer use is provided with the understanding that it is primarily self-service and that most learning will occur through self-instruction instead of library staff intervention. Patrons who plan to use their own equipment are responsible for troubleshooting it themselves.

IV Internet

- (A) The Portage Public Library provides access to a broad range of information resources through the Internet. It makes these services available as part of its mission to fulfill individual informational needs for day-to-day living, cultural, educational, and leisure pursuits. 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.
- (B) 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 the Library's endorsement of the content of that information. The Portage Public 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 library terminals is inaccurate or offensive, the patron should contact the original producer or distributor of the information.

- (C) Users should evaluate Internet sources just as they do print materials, questioning the authority, accuracy, and completeness of the information that is provided.
- (D) The Portage Public 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.

V Copyright Law

- (A) U.S. copyright law (Title 17, U.S. 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 any consequences of copyright infringement lies with the user. The Library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility resulting from such use.
- (B) The library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility arising from access to or use of information obtained through its electronic information systems, or any consequences thereof.

VI Computer Use by Children

- (A) In the case of minors, access, use, or dissemination of information via the library computers is a joint responsibility of the user and the parent or guardian. If parents/guardians feel that the information available through the Internet is not suitable for their child, then caregiver supervision is advised.
- (B) Public libraries, unlike schools, do not serve *in loco parentis* (in place of a parent). Library staff cannot act in the place of parents, nor can they act as a substitute for daycare in providing constant care and supervision. Parents/guardians are responsible for supervising their own child's computer/Internet sessions.
- (C) The Portage Public Library supports the right for each family to decide what appropriate computer/Internet use is for their child. The responsibility for what minors read or view on the Internet rests with parents or guardians.
- (D) Restriction of a child's access to the Internet is the parent's or guardian's responsibility. Parents or guardians are responsible for letting their children know if there are materials they do not want their children to use.
- (E) The Library will work with parents and legal guardians to block a child's computer access entirely, but the library cannot limit computer access by time, platforms, programs, or in any other selective way. Blocking access entirely only applies to the public use computers and the specific library card account the parent or legal guardian identifies. To block a child's access, the custodial parent or legal guardian must submit a signed and dated letter to the Library requesting the child's computer access be blocked. The letter must include the child's library

card number. The block will be in effect until the custodial parent or legal guardian submits another request in writing to lift the block. The block will otherwise expire when the child turns eighteen (18) years old. Officially blocking computer access is a serious matter and goes against the Library's mission. It is recommended that parents or legal guardians first take other educational approaches to training children on appropriate computer use.

- (F) The following are recommended guidelines for parents and guardians to use to assist them in building positive online experiences and behaviors in children, 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 talk to your children about sites you consider inappropriate for them.
 3. Encourage children to use sites recommended on the Library's home page and counsel them to avoid sites you 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, etc.) online.
 6. Provide children with rules on acceptable use of electronic resources, including e-mail and chat rooms.
 7. Teach children to be good online consumers. As with print information, consider the source, date, and accuracy of online information.
 8. For more information on children and teen safety on the Internet, see Child Safety on the Information Highway <http://www.safekids.com/child-safety-on-the-information-highway/> produced by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

VII **Wireless**

- (A) Wireless access is a free public service provided by the Portage Public Library.
- (B) By logging in to the Wireless Network, patrons agree to the terms of this policy.
- (C) Printing on library printers is not offered through the wireless connection. To print, users should transfer their files to a personal storage device (disks, memory sticks, flashdrives, saving to e-mail accounts, etc.), then open the files on a public use computer to access a printer.

This policy replaces any previous policy regarding public computer and Internet use.

Approved by the Portage Public Library Board of Trustees
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