INTERNET ACCESS AND COMPUTER USE POLICY AND GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The Appleton Public Library ("library") provides access to informational, educational, recreational and cultural resources for all library users. To support that, the library provides internet access via library computers and through wireless internet access during open library hours. Use of library equipment and/or the library's network is bound by this policy.

Not all sources on the internet are accurate, trustworthy or legal. The library cannot monitor or accept responsibility for material accessed from other internet sources. The library provides access to resources via the internet and assumes no responsibility for the information provided by non-library websites, databases, social media platforms, or any other web-based services.

POLICY

1. Responsibilities of the Library

    a. The library makes every effort to maintain internet access via computer, networks, and wireless access throughout all hours of operation. Short down times may occur and, when possible, will be posted in advance.
    b. Library staff and some volunteers may be able to assist users with personal laptops, phones or other devices but cannot be expected to know every device and platform. Patrons who request assistance with their devices hold the City of Appleton and their employees harmless for liability. Staff and volunteers have the right to refuse to assist users with their personal devices.
    c. Patron computer use is covered by the library's Privacy Policy. Search history files are deleted from library computers at the end of each session. Internet sign in use is maintained for 90 days via the library's PC management system and filter.
    d. Library staff cannot control specific information on the internet. Libraries do not vouch for or endorse either written material in their collections or electronic information. The library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility arising from access to or use of information obtained through its equipment or network, or any consequences thereof.
    e. The wireless network is an unsecure network. Users should take precautions accordingly to protect themselves.

2. Responsibilities of Users

    Use of electronic information resources, including the internet, must be responsible and ethical, consistent with the purpose for which these resources are provided.

a. Users should be aware that the library is a busy public place shared by people of diverse ages, sensibilities and values.
b. Resources are for educational, informational, recreational and cultural purposes only; resources are not for unauthorized, illegal, or unethical purposes.

c. Patrons must respect the privacy of others by not attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords, or data belonging to others.
d. Patrons must comply with copyright laws. Title 17 of the United States Code protects created works and describes permissible and prohibited uses of protected works. Use of works and infringement is not easily defined and responsibility for interpreting fair use and any consequences of copyright infringement lies with the patron.
e. Patrons must use their own library card number to access a computer. All Wisconsin residents are eligible to obtain a card to access the internet. Visitors may obtain a guest pass with photo ID.

3. Illegal and Prohibited Uses

While respecting individual users' right to privacy, library staff reserves the right to monitor use of computers and the network to ensure compliance with this policy. Examples of unacceptable uses include but are not limited to:

a. Misrepresenting oneself as another user.
b. Harassing other users.
c. Not respecting the privacy of others by interfering with their use.
d. Sending, receiving, or displaying text or graphics that may reasonably be construed by library staff as offensive to the public or attempting to access the same. Websites acceptable in the adult department may not be acceptable in the children's section.
e. Exposing children to harmful materials as set forth within Sec. 948.11 of the Wisconsin Statutes.
f. Violating software licensing agreements.
g. Overuse of system resources such as bandwidth.
h. Attempting to access unauthorized areas of the library's systems or networks or altering components of any network, database or system.
i. Making unauthorized changes to the setup or configuration of library software or hardware.

4. Internet Safety for Children and Teens

a. The library, unlike schools, does not serve in loco parentis (in place of a parent). Library staff cannot act in the place of parents in providing constant care and supervision of children as they explore the internet.
b. The library supports the right for each family to decide the appropriate internet use for their children. Use of the internet provides families an opportunity to discuss sites and content that they feel are appropriate or inappropriate. The library can help support parents and guardians in their efforts to exercise their rights and responsibilities regarding their children's use of electronic resources by providing assistance in determining search strategies and finding and evaluating sites. For more information on children's internet safety see safekids.com and connectsafely.org.

c. Parents may choose to place a restriction on the child's library card to prevent them from accessing internet computers within the library.
d. The following recommendations can help children have positive, safe online experiences:

    i. Use the internet together. Encourage children to use sites recommended on the library's website. Talk with your children about sites you consider inappropriate for them and why. Help them learn to be savvy digital consumers.
    ii. Provide guidelines for your children on the amount of time they should spend online.
    iii. Provide guidelines on acceptable use of resources including social media, email and apps.
    iv. Parents and guardians should instruct minors to safely share personal information on the internet including, but not limited to name, address, password, phone numbers, schools, credit card numbers. This includes through email, instant messaging, online shopping, social media, apps and other commercial sites.
    v. Before giving out any personal information, minors should be confident that they are dealing with someone who is known and trusted by them and their parents or guardians.
    vi. Computers in Children's Services are generally available only to children up to the age of 12, to caregivers of children in the area, or to people doing research involving children's materials.
    vii. Library staff assume that those under age 18 have parental permission to use library resources, including the internet.
    viii. In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the library utilizes internet filters to protect children from harmful online content. Generally speaking, these filters restrict indecent internet content within the library, including wireless access. Adult patrons, 17 years of age and older, have the right to request the internet filter be disabled, without justification, and in a timely manner. Requests to disable the filter should be made at either the Information or Reference Desks. Regardless of whether the filter is in place, patrons are expected to use the internet in a manner that is responsible and ethical, consistent with the purpose for which library resources are provided.

5. Compliance

    a. Library staff may impose restrictions, such as time limits or types of use, on library equipment. Staff may require a valid library card or staff-issued guest pass for some computers, such as the Internet.
    b. Misuse or abuse of computers or internet access may result in suspension of internet access, restriction from the library in its entirety as described in the library's Security and Safety Policy, and may also be subject to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities.

6. Appeals

A person directly affected by a decision made by the library director as it relates to this policy may appeal the decision to the library board as described in the Appleton Public Library Board of Trustees Bylaws.

Approved: 1/07. Amended: 8/2018; 11/2021.