ROWAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Internet Use and Safety Policy

Adopted March 27, 1996 by the RPL Board of Trustees, Revised June 26, 2002, April 26, 2006, September 5, 2014; February 28, 2024. This policy was previously titled 'Policy for Access to Internet Resources.'

Rowan Public Library Mission Statement

Inspiring the spirit of exploration and the power of imagination, promoting the joy of reading, and supporting the lifelong pursuit of knowledge for all people.

Section 1: Purpose of the *Internet Use and Safety Policy*

Rowan Public Library aims to provide the residents of Rowan County ready availability to resources and services that meet their educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs; to be an access point to needed information; and to provide equal access to ideas and information.

Providing Internet access to support the library's mission is an essential function of the library. The Internet enables the library to provide information beyond the confines of its own collection, offering access to a wealth of material personally, professionally, and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages.

Section 2: Objectives of the *Internet Use and Safety Policy*

In keeping with the mission statement of Rowan Public Library, the objectives of this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. To clarify the library's responsibilities in the provision of Internet access and conditions of use

2. To clarify user responsibilities when utilizing the Internet at the library through library-owned devices, computer labs, and WiFi

3. To inform the public technology that protection measures are used by the library in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

Section 3: Library Responsibilities

1. Access.
   a. Internet access is provided through an unsecured public network. Library networked workstations have security layers in place to protect users.
   b. Adaptive equipment and alternative methods for accessing workstations are available. Persons with disabilities who anticipate needing

accommodation or have questions about physical access are encouraged to contact the library before their visit.

2. Confidentiality.
    a. The library does not disclose information that identifies a person as having requested or obtained specific materials, information, or services per North Carolina General Statute §125-19.
    b. The number of sessions and session start and end times are recorded for statistical and library planning purposes.
    c. Workstations are physically cleaned and reset between each session. Browsing histories and any items created or saved by users are automatically erased when the session times out or is ended by the user.

3. Safety.
    a. The library promotes safe and informed use of the Internet by providing professional staff who assist individuals using the Internet and educate the public on identifying authoritative, accurate, and legitimate Internet resources.
    b. The use of library computer labs is determined by age and explained in Sections 6 and 7 of this policy. The library upholds and affirms the right and responsibility of parents and legal guardians to determine and monitor their minor's, and only their minor's, Internet and WiFi use at the library.
    c. The library is not responsible for any direct or indirect damage, or any liability that may arise from an individual's use of the library's Internet services.

Section 4: User Responsibilities

1. Content. Library users accept personal responsibility for determining the accuracy and appropriateness of information obtained via the Internet. Access to offensive, disturbing, and/or illegal material is possible. Information may not be current, accurate or complete.

2. Security. All library Internet access is provided through an unsecured public network. However, library networked workstations have security layers in place to protect users. The security of wireless Internet (WiFi) connections is determined by the security settings on the user's device. All users are responsible for protecting their personal information and safety when accessing social networking sites, electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

3. Inappropriate Use. Library users are prohibited from using the library's network for illegal activity or to display material that violates federal and North Carolina laws.

4. Conditions and Terms of Use. Library users must comply with all library rules regarding use of library-owned workstations including OPACS, computers, laptops, and smart devices. See Section 8 of this policy for further explanation.

Section 5: Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

In compliance with CIPA, technology protection measures (TPM or 'filters') are in place to protect against access to visual depictions that may reasonably be construed as obscene, child pornography, and/or harmful to minors.

Filters are selected, installed, and updated through Rowan County Government's Information Technology Department. Illegal and dangerous sites may be blocked to improve cyber security. It is not guaranteed all such materials and sites will always be blocked. Filters are not allowed to be disabled on library devices for any reason.

Section 6: Internet Access by Minors Aged Eleven (11) and Under

1. The library provides children's computer labs with Internet access for minors aged eleven (11) and under. These labs are in Children's Rooms and access is more regulated than teen or adult computer labs.

2. Parents and legal guardians allowing minors aged eleven (11) and under to access the Internet on *personally owned devices* through the library's WiFi accept personal responsibility for determining the suitability and appropriateness of information accessed through the Internet by their minor.

3. Minors aged eleven (11) and under are not allowed to use teen computer labs. Teen computer labs are strictly reserved for use by minors aged twelve (12) to seventeen (17).

4. Minors aged eleven (11) and under can be granted permission to use adult computer labs as follows:
   a. The minor's parent or legal guardian has visited the library in person to discuss with a librarian the need for their minor to use adult computer labs with a librarian.
   b. The minor's parent or legal guardian has completed the *Permission Form for Minor to Use Adult Computer Labs* allowing said minor to use adult computer labs. See Appendix A of this policy.
   c. A parent, legal guardian, or caregiver sixteen (16) years of age or older always accompanies the minor when the minor uses adult computer labs.

Section 7: Internet Access by Minors aged twelve (12) to seventeen (17)

1. The library provides teen computer labs with Internet access for minors aged twelve (12) to seventeen (17). Individuals eighteen (18) years of age or older are not allowed to use teen computer labs.

2. Minors aged twelve (12) to seventeen (17) can be granted permission to use adult computer labs as follows:
   a. The minor's parent or legal guardian sits beside them in adult computer labs.
   or
   b. The minor's parent or legal guardian has visited the library in person to discuss with a librarian the need for their minor to use adult computer labs, *and;* the minor's parent or legal guardian has completed the *Permission Form for Minor to Use Adult Computer Labs.* See Appendix A of this policy.
      i. A parent, legal guardian, or caregiver is not required to accompany the minor when using adult computer labs once the permission form is on file. However, the library strongly encourages minors to always be accompanied by an adult when using adult computer labs.

Section 8: Conditions and Terms of Internet Use

To ensure use of the Internet is consistent with the mission of Rowan Public Library, the following regulations and rules apply to Internet use at the library:

1. Internet use will be managed in line with the library's *Disruptive Behavior Policy.* This policy is available on the library's website.

2. Failure to use the Internet appropriately and responsibly will result in revocation of computer lab privileges and/or library use privileges. Use that is illegal may result in criminal prosecution.

3. It is the responsibility of the parents/legal guardians of minors to determine what is appropriate for their child with the understanding parents/legal guardians are responsible for any content accessed on the Internet by their minor including, but not limited to, text, audio files, videos, graphics, pictures, or images.

4. Users are to be considerate in their use of the Internet and remember they are in a public place where children may be present. Users are to respect the privacy of others.

5. Users may not send, receive, or display material considered obscene under North Carolina or federal law.

6. Users may not use the Internet and library technology to engage in illegal activity prohibited by North Carolina or federal law, including but not limited to:
   a. Unauthorized access, including 'hacking' or misrepresentation of self by access code, password, or signature
   b. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors
   c. Accessing, sending, or displaying inappropriate, sexually explicit, harassing or disruptive content
   d. Violating copyright laws or software and data licensing restrictions
   e. Altering hardware or software

Section 9: Library Computer Labs, Laptops, and other Smart Devices

Each library branch offers a computer lab which provides workstations (computers, laptops, and other smart devices) with Internet access for in-house use. Use of computer labs requires users to comply with the conditions and terms of Internet use in Sections 6, 7, and 8 of this policy along with the following rules:

1. A Rowan Public Library account in good standing as defined in the *Circulation Policy & Procedures Manual* is required.

2. The library reserves the right to
   a. Place a time limit on computer/laptop use
   b. Require users to have and/or display their library card while in computer labs or upon checking out a laptop
   c. Charge for a guest pass when a user does not have a Rowan Public Library account or said account is not in good standing

3. Users must accept the *Use of Internet and Library Technology Agreement* as part of the login process. See Appendix B of this policy.

4. Users must follow guidelines established by the library for computer lab use. See Appendix C of this policy.

5. Only library staff may restart and log library-owned computers onto the network. Users are not permitted to turn off library-owned computers.

6. Users are to report any computer/laptop problems to library staff.

7. Users whose Internet access or use of library workstations violates this policy are also in violation of the library's *Disruptive Behavior Policy*.

APPENDIX A of *Internet Use and Safety Policy*

FORM: Permission for Minor to Use Adult Computer Labs. Parents/legal guardians must complete the following form as part of the permission process allowing minors to use adult computer labs systemwide.

Permission Form for Minor to Use Adult Computer Labs

To comply with federal regulations, Rowan Public Library requires parent/legal guardian permission for minors (individuals aged seventeen (17) or younger) to use adult computer labs. These labs provide Internet access through computers, laptops, and various smart devices.

As the parent or legal guardian of the minor listed below, I have read the *Internet Use and Safety Policy*. I understand some materials on the Internet may be objectionable. I understand use of adult computer labs might expose my minor to inappropriate materials. I accept responsibility for the guidance of my minor's Internet use by agreeing to the following:

Initial beside the permission you are authorizing below:

_____ I allow my minor aged eleven (11) or under to use adult computer labs when accompanied and supervised by myself, or an individual named below. I understand use will not be allowed if myself or an individual named below is not accompanying them. Individuals named below are aged sixteen (16) or older.

_____
_____

_____ I allow my minor age twelve (12) to seventeen (17) to use adult computer labs independently without adult supervision. I understand it is my responsibility to set and convey standards for my minor to follow when accessing the Internet independently.

I understand my minor's library account will be updated to indicate the above permission. This permission is active until they turn eighteen (18). This form will be kept on file at the library until the minor turns eighteen (18). I understand I can contact the library at any time to update or revoke this permission.

RPL staff will complete the information below *as provided by the parent/legal guardian:*
Minor's Full Name_____
Minor's Date of Birth _____   Current Age of minor _____
Minor's Library Card # (required) _____
Parent/Legal Guardian's Full Name _____
Parent/Legal Guardian's Library Card # (required) _____
Phone # _____

Parent/legal guardian will sign below:
          I hereby grant permission for the minor identified above to use the Rowan Public Library adult computer labs.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B of *Internet Use and Safety Policy*

Systemwide Computer Lab Sign-On Screen Agreement. Users must accept the following agreement as part of the digital login process in Rowan Public Library computer labs.

Use of Internet and Library Technology Agreement

By selecting the 'Accept' button below, I agree to abide by the library's *Internet Access and Safety Policy* including the following:

I will use the Internet and library technology (including, but not limited to, computers, laptops, scanners, and smart devices) for lawful purposes in an appropriate and responsible manner consistent with the educational and information purposes for which they are provided and to follow all rules, procedures, and guidelines concerning Internet and computer lab use.

Failure to use the Internet and library technology appropriately and responsibly will result in revocation of my computer lab privileges and/or library use privileges. Use that is illegal may result in criminal prosecution.

It is my responsibility to protect my personal information and safety when using social networking sites, electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

I will not use the Internet and library technology to engage in illegal activity prohibited by North Carolina or federal law, including but not limited to

- Unauthorized access, including 'hacking' or misrepresentation of myself by access code, password, or signature
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors
- Accessing, sending, or displaying inappropriate, sexually explicit, harassing, or disruptive, content
- Violating copyright laws or software and data licensing restrictions
- Altering hardware or software

I am accessing the Internet at my own discretion. The Internet allows users to connect to a vast network of resources which may be reliable and current or may be inaccurate or out-of-date. I understand some material available on the Internet might contain items that are illegal, inaccurate, or potentially offensive or disturbing. I understand the library does not monitor and has no control over materials obtained on the Internet and cannot be held responsible for Internet content.

I am aware **library computer sessions automatically time out**. It is my responsibility to save my work before my session times out.

I am aware **library computer labs thirty (30) minutes before the library closes**. It is my responsibility to save my work before the computer automatically shuts down.

Accept Button (Accept the use policy and start your session.)

Decline Button (Decline the use policy and lose your turn on this computer.)

APPENDIX C of *Internet Use and Safety Policy*

Guidelines for Rowan Public Library Computer Labs. The following guidelines are used systemwide to ensure secure, quality, and consistent user experiences.

GUIDELINES

For Rowan Public Library Computer Labs

As of February 2024

1. No more than two (2) people may work at a single workstation. Additional seating may be approved by library staff upon request.
2. User work is not permanently saved to library-owned computers/laptops. Computers and laptops automatically purge and reset when sessions automatically time out or are ended by users.
3. It is the responsibility of the user to save their work. Removable devices may be used to save work.
4. Removeable devices left by users are retained for three (3) months in a secure location. After three (3) months, these devices are destroyed.
5. Unclaimed removeable devices are never loaned to others or repurposed for use.
6. Only library staff may restart and log the computers onto the network.
7. Users should report any workstation problems to library staff. Users are not permitted to reboot workstations.
8. Personal belongings cannot be left unattended in the library, including computer labs. Library staff are not responsible for items left unattended.
9. Lab computers may be reserved.
10. Computer lab reservations will be held for ten (10) minutes past the reservation time. Once this time has passed, the reservation is automatically cancelled.
11. Users are to view print jobs *before* sending them to the printer. The library does not reimburse printing costs for test pages, pages not printing as designed, unintended page breaks, incorrect margins, etc.
12. Only library-supplied paper is used for printing. Exceptions may be approved by library staff upon request. Printing costs still apply when user-supplied paper is used for printing. Printing costs factor in the cost of toner and annual copier service and maintenance fees.
13. Food is not allowed in the library, including computer labs.
14. Beverages are allowed in the library, including computer labs, provided containers have working lids that can be securely closed.
15. Beverages are not permitted anywhere in the Edith M. Clark History Room, including the History Room computer lab.
16. Cell phones' audio, ringers, and effects are to be muted in computer labs.
17. Phone conversations are not permitted in computer labs even if the user is utilizing headphones or earbuds. Individuals talking on the phone will be asked to leave the computer lab.

Guidelines Last Updated 2/7/2024 4:24 PM