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## Computer, Gaming and Internet Policy

*This policy supersedes any other policies on this topic. Policy has been updated and approved by the library board on 8.23.18*

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### I. Purpose of Policy

- A. The Mount Horeb Public Library places a significant emphasis on technology as a means to provide access to a broad range of information and entertainment resources for learning and recreation.
- B. 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.
- C. To ensure equal and fair access is provided, it is necessary to have a policy, which defines the relationship and responsibility of the library and the customer as it relates to the use of library computers and laptops, access to the Internet and gaming software and equipment.
- D. The library provides public access to computers and laptops for life-long learning purposes: to promote access to the online catalog, LINKcat; to provide an opportunity for computer literacy for library customers of all ages; to access the Internet and e-mail programs; to access research-oriented databases; and to write reports, resumes, or a myriad of other school, work, hobby, or employment-related projects.
- E. The library also provides public access to computers, laptops, the Internet (wired and wireless), and gaming equipment in an effort to serve the entertainment interests of all ages, youth in particular.

### II. Internet Access

- A. The Mount Horeb 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 availability of networked information via library computers (or library's wireless) does not constitute the library's endorsement of the content of that information. The Mount Horeb 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 computers, laptops, (or library's wireless) inaccurate or offensive, the patron should contact the original producer or distributor of the information.
- C. Customers should evaluate Internet sources just as they do print materials, questioning the authority, accuracy, and completeness of the information that is provided.
- D. The Mount Horeb 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.

### III. Appropriate Internet Use Guidelines

- A. Internet authorization is required for youth under the age of 16 and is recorded in the youth's library record, including the name of parent authorizing use.
- B. Youth whose parents have not authorized Internet use will be placed on the "suspended" list in the computer lab management software.
- C. Youth found to be using a friend's card to access either the Internet or online games will be subject to consequences as outlined in Section XI Violations of Policy.
- D. The following statements list actions not tolerated and held to be unacceptable Internet (wired or wireless) use.
  - 1. Spamming, Invasion of Privacy, Forging of Headers: Customers shall not send unsolicited bulk and/or commercial messages over the Internet or engage in activities that invade another's privacy. Customers must respect the privacy of others and shall not misrepresent oneself as another user – this includes logging in with another customer's library card account. Nor shall patrons forge or misrepresent message headers, whether in whole or in part, to mask the originator of the message.
  - 2. Intellectual Property Right Violations: Customers may not 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.
  - 3. Obscene or Indecent Speech or Materials: Customers may not advertise, solicit, transmit, store, post, display, or otherwise make available obscene or indecent images or other materials. According to the Wisconsin State Statutes (Sec. 948.11), customers using the Internet may not expose children to harmful materials and makes it a crime to expose children to pictures or images of nudity, sexually explicit conduct, or physical torture or brutality that appeal to prurient, shameful, or morbid interests and are patently offensive to prevailing adult standards regarding materials suitable for children. Customers who ignore or abuse the tenets of this policy will have their computer use privileges revoked. The Mount Horeb 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.
  - 4. Defamatory or Abusive Language: Customers shall not libel, slander, or maliciously offend other users. Customers 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.

5. Hacking: Customers 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 uses.
6. Distribution of Internet Viruses, Trojan Horses or Other Destructive Activities: Customers shall not distribute information regarding the creation of and sending Internet viruses, worms, Trojan Horses, ping, flooding, or denial of service attacks, including activities that disrupt the use of or interfere with the ability of others to effectively use any connected network, system, service or equipment.
7. Other Illegal Activities: Customers shall not advertise, transmit, or otherwise make available any software product or service designed to violate this Agreement. Customers may not advertise, transmit, or otherwise make available ponzi schemes, pyramid schemes, fraudulently charge credit cards, or pirate software.

#### **IV. Wireless Access**

- A. Wireless Internet access is a free public service provided by the Mount Horeb Public Library.
- B. When customers log in to the Wireless Network, they are agreeing to Section III, Appropriate Internet Use Guidelines, D 1-7 of this policy.
- C. Printing on the designated "wireless library printer" is available through a wireless connection from patron devices. (It is not possible at this time to wirelessly print from library computers.) If patrons do not have their own devices, they 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 computer lab terminal to access a printer.

#### **V. Computer & Laptop Access**

- A. To use the public computers, it is suggested that a customer have a library card and know the PIN (personal identification number) for his/her account. Staff may provide customers with their card numbers and PINs on occasion when they forget their library card if they can recite particulars such as home address, phone number, or birth date to confirm the use of the correct barcode and library record. However, customers are encouraged to bring their library cards.
- B. Computer use is offered in 60-minute sessions. Additional sessions may be used. Customers may reserve up to two (2) hours of continuous computer time to access the 120-minute maximum. Additional time is allowed if approved by library staff. Reservations may be made up to 7 days in advance using the [My PC Public Booking Site](#) or by calling the Help Desk and asking a staff member to reserve the computer or laptop for you. Please see the library website for [instructions](#) on reserving a computer via the ["My PC Public Booking Site."](#)
- C. The library offers two homework stations in the Intermediate Area for children 12 and under. If older children or tutors need to use those computers for homework or other similar reasons, staff may approve use of those stations at their discretion. Six computer stations and two "catalog only" computers are offered to the general public (all ages).
- D. Computers and laptops are available during regular operating hours until 15 minutes before the library closes. Unreserved computers and laptops are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

#### **VI. Appropriate Computer & Laptop Workstation Use Guidelines**

- A. Food and drinks are not allowed near any of the library computers, laptops or gaming equipment.
- B. Children six (6) years of age or younger must be accompanied by a parent or guardian or by an older sibling or friend (11 years or older) when using a computer, laptop, or the LINKcat computers.
- C. Youth under the age of 16 must have permission from a parent or guardian to use the computers or laptops with Internet access. (This permission is retained on the child's library card record.)
- D. There is a limit of one (1) person per workstation. Any deviation from this limit must be approved by the library director or library staff. (An exception may be granted for homework related projects or projects that involve a parent and child, etc.)
- E. Customers should save all information on personal removable media (disks, memory sticks, flashdrives, saving to e-mail accounts, etc.) Hard drives on library computers are automatically cleared when rebooted.
- F. The Mount Horeb Public Library will not be responsible for injuries or damages to possessions of individuals or groups resulting from the use of the computer or laptop. This includes credit card charges, identity theft, or other potential damages that are possible when using networked computers.
- G. Printouts will be charged at \$.10 for black and white and for color. Customers must pay for printing to be enabled. Customers using the laptops may save their information on a USB drive and use the computer workstations to access the printers.
- H. If an individual or group of computer users creates a disturbance (i.e. talking in a voice beyond a whisper, etc.) 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. Congregating around a computer or laptop to watch others engaged either in gaming or chatting will be discouraged and may result in removal from the computer or laptop.
- I. Inappropriate use of the library's computer workstations for illegal and unacceptable behaviors is outlined in Section III, Appropriate Internet Use Guidelines, D 1-7. The library will take disciplinary measures including but not limited to discontinued computer or laptop service or loss of library privileges. Illegal use of computers or laptops may also be subject to prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities.

## **VII. Gaming Software and Equipment Access**

- A. The gaming equipment (and its software) is available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- B. Customers must sign up at the Circulation Desk.
- C. Staff may look up the customers' card numbers and checkout the software to them when youth forget their library card. However, customers are encouraged to bring their library cards.
- D. Gaming sessions are limited to ½ hour if others are waiting and games cease play ½ hour before closing.
- E. Only one (1) gaming controller may be checked out per card.
- F. Only one (1) in house game may be checked out at a time on a library record.

## **VIII. Appropriate Gaming Software and Equipment Use Guidelines**

- A. Children under the age of 11 may not use the Teen gaming equipment.
- B. Youth may play games they personally own on the library's gaming equipment; however, the games must be rated E (everyone) or T (teen). M (mature) is not allowed. If playing a game brought from home, youth are still subject to the ½ hour time limit if others are waiting.
- C. The youth must present the games they bring into the library to the circulation staff for review. The circulation staff will alert the Reference staff to the presence of a privately owned game in play in the

- Teen Area. Circulation staff reserves the right to hold on to a particular title that does not meet the library's criteria until the teen is ready to leave the building at which time the game will be returned.
- D. Help Desk staff reserve the right to deny the use of any game brought into the library and played on the library's gaming equipment. The restriction or denial of any particular game may vary from librarian to librarian depending on the issues or circumstances they deem valid for denying use of a particular game.
  - E. If an individual or group of gamers creates a disturbance (i.e. talking in a voice beyond a whisper, etc.) 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.
  - F. All gaming software and equipment/controllers must be turned back into the Circulation Desk at the end of play.

## **IX. Supervising Children's Use of the Internet**

- A. The public library, unlike schools, does not serve in loco parentis. Librarians cannot act in the place of parents in providing constant care and supervision of children as they explore online. Mount Horeb Public Library supports the right for each family to decide appropriate online use for their children.
- B. The responsibility for what minors read or view online rests solely with parents or guardians. Parents or legal guardians must assume responsibility for deciding what materials are appropriate for their children and are responsible for placing restrictions on their children's access to online information. In supervising children's use of online information, parents or legal guardians should provide children with guidelines on acceptable use of electronic resources, including email and chat rooms.
- C. In extreme situations 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 in house computers (not wireless or mobile devices) and the specific library card account the parent or legal guardian identifies.
  - 1. 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.
  - 2. The block will be in effect until the custodial parent or legal guardian submits another request in writing to lift the block. The request must be signed and dated, and it must include the child's library card number.
  - 3. The block will otherwise expire when the child turns sixteen (16) years old. Officially blocking computer access is a serious matter and goes against the library mission. It is recommended that parents or legal guardians first take other educational approaches to training children on appropriate computer use.
- D. The following are recommended guidelines for parents and legal 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 the types of sites you consider inappropriate for them.
  - 3. Encourage children to use sites recommended on the library's homepage 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) online.
6. Provide children with guidelines on acceptable use of electronic resources, including email and chat rooms.
7. Teach children to evaluate the quality of information. As with print information, consider the source, date, and accuracy of online information.

## **X. Staff Assistance**

- A. 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. Customers who plan to use their own equipment are responsible for troubleshooting it themselves.
- B. The Help Desk staff is willing to provide assistance with the computers; while the staff considers computer help as part of their job, and the Help Desk staff is qualified to function as technical support; there are limits to what they can do.
- C. Cursorsy assistance related to the use of software programs will be available as staff time permits.
- D. Intensive assistance or training related to the use of software programs is not available from the library staff (unless offered through a formal class).
- E. Specific guidelines for staff computer and laptop assistance:
  1. Training of software programs: the staff will open a particular software program and give basic pointers, but will not be able to teach complexities; customers will need to take a specific class or use the tutorials on hand in the lab.
  2. Document creation: Staff may be able to help customers format, save and print documents but will not type or otherwise assist in document creation. Customers will be directed to local resources.
  3. Internet searching: Staff will not be able to teach customers all the facets of the Internet, but will open a search engine and explain the concept of links. However, depending on the nature of a customer's search, it may be appropriate for the Help Desk librarian to conduct the search.
  4. Mouse instruction: The staff will give basic mouse instruction (how to hold, move and click) and point customers towards some Internet site where they can practice for themselves.
  5. Email: The staff will point customers to free online email sites; customers will need to fill out the forms themselves and pick their own passwords.
  6. Attaching documents to email: The staff may be able to assist in attaching documents to email.
  7. Burning a CD: Help Desk staff may be able to assist with this request.
  8. Scanning a document: Help Desk staff may be able to assist with the request.
  9. Filing taxes online: Help Desk staff will be able to assist customers in locating forms and instructions on line; Help Desk staff does not fill out the forms or provide any recommendations related to which forms a customer should be filling out.
  10. Staff will be able to point customers to various sites and depending on personal knowledge of the site, may be able to offer further assistance. Basic mouse and Internet competence is encouraged.

## **XI. Violations of Policy**

- A. The nature and seriousness of the offense shape the consequences.
- B. The following actions may be taken:
  1. Warnings - discussion of Computer and Gaming policy and other applicable policies.

2. Suspension of some aspect of library service (Internet, PlayStation, checkout of materials, etc.) for any length of time from 1 day to 3 months.
3. Removal from the library's property for any length of time from 1 day to 3 months.
4. Parents/guardians/caregivers of children under the age of 16 will receive a letter notifying them of the conduct violation and length of suspension of service or removal from the library property if suspension of library service exceeds 24 hours.
5. Report to the authorities (Library Board and/or Police Department).
6. Payment for damages to library materials and/or property, including cost to fix or replace.
7. Banning from the library property for a period of up to a year or longer as per the discretion of the Library Director and the authorities.