



Approving Official(s): IT Manager, Library Director, Board of Directors.

Responsible Office: WCPL Williamsburg, KY

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INTERNET AND COMPUTER USE POLICY

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Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to ensure equitable, safe, and responsible use of the Whitley County Public Library's computers and internet resources. These services are provided to support the Library's mission of offering informational, educational, and recreational opportunities to the community while maintaining a welcoming and respectful environment for all users.

Purpose

The Whitley County Public Library provides public access to computers and the Internet for lawful purposes consistent with the Library's mission. All users are expected to use these resources responsibly, comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws, and adhere to Library rules and procedures. Misuse of Library computers or Internet access may result in the loss of privileges or other appropriate action.

Audience

This policy applies to all individuals who use the Whitley County Public Library's computers, internet access, and related technology resources, including patrons, guests, and visitors of all ages.

Definitions

1. Access and Availability

- Computers are available for use by all library patrons with a valid library card or guest pass.
- Time limits may be applied during periods of high demand.
- Computers automatically log off after each session to protect user privacy.
- Users are responsible for saving their work on personal storage devices; files may not be saved permanently on library computers.

2. Acceptable Use

- Computers and Internet access must be used in a lawful and ethical manner.
- Users shall not:
 - Access, display, or distribute obscene or illegal material.
 - Engage in hacking, damaging, or attempting to damage library systems, networks, or equipment.
 - Violate copyright laws, licensing agreements, or software restrictions.
 - Misrepresent themselves or attempt to gain unauthorized access to other users' data or online accounts.
 - Use library computers for commercial purposes, unauthorized solicitation, or political campaigning.

3. Internet Filtering and Safety

- In compliance with the **Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)**, the library uses content filtering to block access to obscene or harmful material as defined by law.
- Filters are not perfect; parents or guardians are responsible for supervising their children's Internet activity.

- Adults (17 and older) may request that filtering be disabled for a particular website for research or other lawful purposes.

4. Privacy and Security

- The library respects user confidentiality but cannot guarantee complete privacy when using public computers or the Internet.
- Patrons are encouraged to avoid entering personal, financial, or confidential information on public workstations.
- Staff may access computer use records only as required for maintenance, troubleshooting, or to enforce library policies.

5. Wireless Internet Access

- Free Wi-Fi is available for public use during normal library hours.
- Users are responsible for the security of their own devices and data.
- The library is not liable for any loss of data, damage to personal equipment, or exposure to viruses while using the network.

6. Staff Assistance

Library staff are available to help with basic computer and Internet use, but cannot provide extensive one-on-one training, enter personal information on behalf of patrons, or complete transactions for users.

7. Violations and Consequences

- Misuse of library computers or the Internet may result in suspension or loss of access privileges.
- Illegal activities will be reported to law enforcement.
- Repeated violations may lead to a permanent ban from library technology services.

8. Disclaimer

The Whitley County Public Library is not responsible for the accuracy, quality, or legality of content found on the Internet. Users access online information at their own discretion.

9. Policy Review

This policy is subject to periodic review and may be updated as technology, laws, or library needs change.

Policy Implementation

The Internet & Computer Use Policy is implemented through consistent staff oversight, clearly communicated expectations, and technical safeguards designed to ensure equitable and responsible use of Library technology resources.

Access to Library computers and Internet services is managed through authentication procedures such as library card verification or guest passes. Time limits and reservation systems **may** be used to promote fair access for all patrons.

Acceptable use expectations are communicated to patrons through posted signage, the Library website, and verbal guidance from staff when necessary. Staff are authorized to address misuse of Library computers or Internet access in a respectful and non-confrontational manner.

To comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Library utilizes Internet filtering software on public access computers. Procedures are in place to allow adult patrons to request the temporary disabling of filters for lawful purposes, consistent with Library guidelines.

Library staff receive training on the enforcement of this policy, including how to respond to violations, document incidents when appropriate, and apply consequences consistently. Progressive enforcement measures may include warnings, temporary suspension of privileges, or further action in accordance with Library procedures.

The Library regularly reviews and updates technology systems and this policy to ensure continued compliance with legal requirements, evolving technology, and community needs.

Consequences of Violating this Policy

Failure to comply with the Whitley County Public Library Internet & Computer Use Policy may result in one or more of the following actions, depending on the severity and frequency of the violation:

- **Verbal Warning**
For minor or first-time violations, Library staff may issue a verbal warning and provide guidance on acceptable use.
- **Temporary Suspension of Privileges**
Repeated or moderate violations may result in the temporary suspension of computer or Internet access privileges for a defined period.
- **Extended Suspension or Revocation of Privileges**
Serious, repeated, or intentional violations may result in an extended suspension or permanent loss of computer and Internet access privileges.
- **Immediate Termination of a Session**
Library staff may immediately end a computer session if a user's behavior is disruptive, violates Library policy, or compromises the safety or functionality of Library systems.
- **Removal from the Library**
Users who refuse to comply with staff direction or whose behavior disrupts Library operations may be asked to leave the Library in accordance with the Library's Code of Conduct.
- **Referral to Law Enforcement**
Illegal activities, including but not limited to harassment, threats, or access to unlawful content, may be reported to appropriate authorities.

All enforcement actions will be applied consistently and at the discretion of Library staff, with consideration given to the nature of the violation, prior incidents, and applicable laws.

Policy URL:

<https://whitleylibrary.org/assets/policies/computer-use-policy.pdf>

POLICY