Computer Use and Internet Safety Policy

Polk County Public Libraries (PCPL) provide free public access to the Internet for informational, educational and recreational purposes. Computers and the Internet enable the Libraries to provide access to ideas, information and resources beyond its collection.

Public computers and Internet access are provided to all library users and do not require a library card. While the Internet contains a wealth of helpful material, it also provides access to information that may be unreliable and sites that some may find offensive. The Libraries have no control over material on the Internet, and are not responsible for its content. Users access the Internet at their own discretion. As with other library materials, responsibility for online materials accessed by minors rests with their parents or guardians.

The Libraries' network, whether accessed wirelessly or on the public computers, is an open network, and therefore not secure. The Libraries cannot guarantee the safety/privacy of communication across the network. The Libraries are not responsible for damage to a customer's property or for any damage, liability or loss of data that may occur from use of or from the inability to use or access the Libraries' computers or Internet connections. PCPL do not track individual Internet use by minors or adults.

CIPA Compliant Statement

CHILDREN'S INTERNET PROTECTION ACT (Pub. L. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h))

The Polk County Public Libraries receive federal funding for Internet access. As a result the libraries comply with CIPA, a federal law, which requires the installation of filtering software on Internet terminals. Filtering software helps to protect against access to visual depictions deemed 'obscene' (as defined in 18 USC Section 1460), 'child pornography' (as defined in 18 USC Section 2256), or 'harmful to minors.' (as defined in 47 USC Section 254 [G].

Filtering software is flawed. In some instances, it may block access to constitutionally protected material on the Internet or fail to block access to material that is obscene or harmful. Library staff are unable to disable filtering software even when a legitimate site is blocked.

Wireless Access

PCPL offer free unlimited wireless Internet access to all library visitors using their laptop computers or other mobile devices. Use of the service constitutes acceptance of this Computer Use and Internet Safety Policy and the Customer Conduct Policy. When accessing wireless Internet through the library, users should be aware that:

- Most WiFi equipment will be compatible. However, the Libraries make no guarantees as to compatibility of a patron's hardware with the Libraries' network.
- There is no guarantee that a wireless connection can be made or maintained.
- ~~The Libraries do not filter the content of wireless Internet access.~~
- Anti-virus software and security protection are the responsibility of the patron.
- The Libraries are not responsible for any loss of data, or damage to personal equipment as a result of using the wireless service.
- The Libraries are not responsible for loss or theft of unattended mobile devices.
- The Libraries reserve the right to terminate a wireless Internet session at any time.
- The Libraries reserve the right to determine which electrical outlets can be used for powering mobile devices.
- Connecting mobile devices directly to the PCPL network using an Ethernet cable is prohibited.

Technology Assistance

PCPL staff is available to help with basic computer questions, using digital library resources, using mobile devices, and setting up an email or social media account. On-demand technology assistance may be available, but cannot be guaranteed. Users interested in technology assistance should complete a Book-a-Tech appointment request form.

- Appointments are scheduled based on staff availability.
- Staff are unable to repair devices.
- The library is not liable for any damage to customer equipment that may occur during a help session.
- Staff may not be able to provide assistance for all device types, programs, and problems.

Responsibilities of Users

When using a PCPL computer, wireless network or Internet-enabled device (including personally owned devices), it is your responsibility to ensure that you, and minors in your care:

- Refrain from receiving, viewing, displaying, sending or forwarding obscene or disruptive messages, files, or images in violation of North Carolina state law including N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-26.
- Demonstrate judgment, respect for others and appropriate discretion when viewing materials and refrain from displaying material on a terminal when so requested by library staff.
- Take care to protect your personal information and safety when using social networking sites, email, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communications.
- Back up and save documents while working. Staff are unable to retrieve work from previous sessions.
- Adhere to established time limits. Staff are unable to extend computer sessions past closing.

- Notify library staff of the need for a time limit extension at least 15 minutes before the current session is set to end.
- End your session and leave the workstation if asked to do so by a PCPL staff member, even if you have not completed your session.
- Use equipment and networks only for legal activity, including adherence to copyright or other rights of third parties, and in a manner consistent with the Customer Conduct Policy. Behaviors that are prohibited include unauthorized access ("hacking"), harassment ("cyberbullying") and unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors.
- Avoid interfering with or disrupting library hardware, software, networks or services.

Customers will be asked to adapt their behavior to comply with library policy. If a customer fails to do so, appropriate action will be taken, up to and including permanent expulsion from PCPL facilities. Illegal activity will be referred to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Approved by the Polk County Public Library Board of Trustees
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