

# Internet Acceptable Use Policy

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The Public Libraries of Shelby County System provides public access to the Internet to assist Public Libraries of Shelby County patrons meet the basic information needs, facilitate life-long learning, and supply sources of information in all fields of knowledge. The Internet provides access to information far beyond the library's resources. The Internet is a gateway to a diversity of information on a multitude of topics from all countries and cultures around the world. While most of the information accessed can be valuable and enlightening, the user may also find materials that are unreliable, personally offensive or illegal under U.S. Law.

The Public Libraries of Shelby County System follows and strictly enforces Alabama State Law 13A-12-200.3 that specifically prohibits the dissemination or display of obscene matter. Examples of prohibited use includes, but is not limited to: Attempt to view or download child pornography or inappropriate or obscene material in e-mail transmissions, via websites, or on thumb drives. Additional examples are provided on page seven (7) of this policy.

Public Libraries of Shelby County System complies with requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Technology protection measures are used on all public access computers connected to the Public Libraries of Shelby County wide area network. A filtering service is used to prevent access by minor children to inappropriate materials as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

Technology protection measures may be disabled, as necessary, for bona fide research or other lawful purposes by library computer users over the age of 18. Requests to by-pass the library's filtering system will be reviewed by the Director of the Public Libraries of Shelby County System on a case by case basis to determine that the unfiltered access that is requested will not violate federal or Alabama State laws. Only the Mildred B. Harrison Regional Library Director shall

have the authority to approve any requests to by-pass these technology protection measures. The decision of the Mildred B. Harrison Regional Library Director shall be final for all requests.

## **Internet Safety Policy**

As part of this document an Internet Safety Policy is included to protect children under the age of 18 while using public access computers connected to the Internet and World Wide Web in the Public Libraries of Shelby County System. This policy is strictly enforced by the Public Libraries of Shelby County System. This policy addresses the following areas of concern:

### **1. Access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web**

- Minor Children under the age of 18 must have the written permission of their parents or legal guardians to use the Public Libraries of Shelby County computers connected to the Internet.
- Children under the age of 8 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.
- Public Libraries of Shelby County System makes use of a filtering service on all library computers with Internet access to prevent minors from accessing visual depictions that are (1) obscene, (2) child pornography or (3) harmful to minors. The term "harmful to minors" is defined by the Communications Act of 1934 as meaning any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex or excretion; depicts, describes or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

- Children and teens under the age of 18 are not allowed an opportunity to by-pass the Public Libraries of Shelby County System's filtering service for any reason.
- Public Libraries of Shelby County System maintains a special web site for children and teens.
- Public Libraries of Shelby County System provides training on safe and effective Internet use and disseminates information to library patrons on Child Internet Safety.
- Public Libraries of Shelby County System encourages library staff to guide children and teens under the age of 18 away from materials that may be inappropriate as defined by U.S., state, and local laws.

**2. The safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communication.**

To address the issue of the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communication the Public Libraries of Shelby County System provides training and also urges minors and their parents to keep in mind the following safety guidelines:

- It is not acceptable for a minor to receive any material that is deemed harmful to minors under the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) through a web site, email, chat room or other direct electronic communication.
- Children and teens are instructed never to arrange a fact-to-face meeting with someone via the computer without parents' or legal guardians' approval.
- Children and teens are instructed never to respond to messages that are suggestive, obscene, threatening or make one uncomfortable.
- Children and teens are cautioned to remember that people online may not be who they say they are.
- Children and teens are cautioned to remember that everything one reads may not be true.

- Public Libraries of Shelby County System staff instruct parents and legal guardians to report any incident of the transmission of child pornography to local law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-843-5648 or <https://report.cybertip.org>.
- Public Libraries of Shelby County System staff is required to report any incident of the transmission of child pornography to the Mildred B. Harrison Regional Library System Director. The Director is required to report any incidents to local law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

### **3. Unauthorized access including “hacking” and other unlawful activities by minors online**

To address the issue of unauthorized access, including “hacking”, and other unlawful activities by minors online, minors, their parents and all other library users are hereby advised that use of the library’s computers for hacking or any other unlawful activity is strictly prohibited. Violators will lose computer privileges and will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

### **4. Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors**

To address the issue of the unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors the Public Libraries of Shelby County System provides training programs and also urges minors and their parents to keep in mind the following safety guidelines:

- Children and teens are instructed never to give out identifying information such as home address, school name, or telephone number.
- Children and teens are instructed to let parents or guardians decide whether personal information should be revealed.
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to talk to their children about the dangers of disclosing personal information.

- Children and teens are instructed never to arrange a face to face meeting with someone via the computer without parents or approval
- Children and teens are cautioned that people online may not be who they say they are.
- Any personal information gathered by the Public Libraries of Shelby County System for library card applications and entered into the Public Libraries of Shelby County System's computerized data base will not be shared and will remain strictly confidential.

## **5. Technology Protection Measures designed to restrict minors' access to materials harmful to minors.**

Minor children under the age of 18 must have the written permission of their parents or legal guardians to use the Public Libraries of Shelby County public access computers. The Public Libraries of Shelby County System has technology protection measures in place in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) that blocks or filters Internet access to web sites that have been determined to contain materials harmful to minors. Under no circumstances will a child under the age of 18 be allowed to circumvent the filtering mechanism in place. The only instance in which the technology protection measures may be disabled is to enable adult access to information that would be blocked by the filtering service. In order to receive unfiltered access adults must request access for bona fide research or other lawful purposes. The Library Director has the authority to decide if an adult's request for unfiltered access shall be allowed. Only under these circumstances will the Director of the Mildred B. Harrison Regional Library disable the technology protection measures temporarily on specific computers for a specified session for an approved reason. Children under the age of 18 are not allowed to request that technology protection measures be disabled and will not receive approval.

### **Kid's Rules for Online Safety**

The following is a handout about online safety that is given to parents and children when applying for a library card:

1. I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parents' work address/telephone number, or the name and location of my school with my parents' permission.
2. I will tell my parents right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
3. I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother or father along.
4. I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents.
5. I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do I will tell my parents right away.
6. I will not send any mean or bullying messages to classmates. If a classmate sends a mean or bullying message to me I will tell my parents immediately.
7. I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.
8. I will not give out my Internet password to anyone (even my best friends).
9. I will be a good online citizen and not do anything that hurts other people or is against the law.

### **Rules Governing Use of Public Access Computers**

Due to the limited resources available for provision of public access to the Internet, the Public Libraries of Shelby County System may set limits on the use of files of still or moving images or sound or on downloading files in any medium. The Library also reserves the right to limit the amount of time an individual patron can devote to a single session. The public must comply with all applicable federal,

state and local laws, including laws governing the transmission and dissemination of information while accessing the Internet.

### **Examples of Unacceptable Use**

Unacceptable use includes but is not limited to the following:

Patrons may not:

- Use the Public Libraries of Shelby County System network to make unauthorized entry into other computational, information or communication services or resources.
- Distribute unsolicited advertising;
- Invade the privacy of others;
- Participate in cyber bullying;
- Make any attempt to damage computer equipment or software;
- Engage in any activity that is harassing or defamatory either in person or online;
- Use the Internet for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other rights of third parties or in a manner inconsistent with the Library's tax-exempt status or its proper operation;
- Attempt to view or download child pornography or inappropriate or obscene material in e-mail transmissions, via websites, or on thumb drives;
- Damage or destroy equipment, software, data belonging to the Public Libraries of Shelby County System or to other users including adding, altering or deleting files on workstations hard drives or other Public Libraries of Shelby County System computer equipment;
- Make unauthorized copies of copyright protected material;
- Violate software license agreements;
- Violate computer system or network integrity including attempts to by-pass network security functions, obtain passwords or alter the configuration of Public Libraries of Shelby County System workstations in any way.
- Participate in illegal gambling on the Internet; and
- Waste finite resources including printing copies with paying.

**Violations may result in loss of access. Unlawful activities will be dealt with in an appropriate manner and may involve contacting local law enforcement.**

### **Patrons' Security**

Patrons should be aware that the Internet is not a secure medium and that third parties may be able to obtain information regarding users' activities. However, the Public Libraries of Shelby County System will not release information on the use of specific Internet resources by members of the public except as required by law or necessary for the proper operation of the Public Libraries of Shelby County System.

### **Compliance**

The patron's access to the Public Libraries of Shelby County System's computer network and Internet is a privilege, not a right. A patron violates this policy by his or her own actions or by failing to report any violations by other users that come to their attention. Further, a patron violates this policy if he or she permits another to use his or her account or password to access the computer network and Internet. Failure to comply with this policy and its procedures will result in the forfeiture of the user's right to access these computers.

The Public Libraries of Shelby County System reserves the right to take appropriate action to insure compliance with this policy.

The Public Libraries of Shelby County System reserves the right to determine what constitutes inappropriate behavior. The Public Libraries of Shelby County System reserves the right to terminate the Internet access privilege of any person abusing these policies.

Use of the Public Libraries of Shelby County System's Internet computers will be on a first-come, first-served basis. No appointments will be taken. The Internet computers, however, may be reserved by library staff for library programs or training sessions.