Northport-East Northport Public Library

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Computer Use Policy

The Board of Trustees of the Northport-East Northport Public Library recognizes that computers are essential research and educational tools in carrying out the library's mission to facilitate and encourage the unrestrained pursuit and exchange of knowledge, experience and opinion. The Internet offers access to many valuable local, national and international sources of information. However, it is a fluid environment with the content and format of information constantly changing. Some information on the Internet may be inaccurate, incomplete, dated or offensive to some individuals.

A knowledgeable information consumer must evaluate the validity and appropriateness of information found. Every library user benefits from expanded access to information beyond the walls of a library.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Trustees recognize the constitutional rights of individuals to decide what material to access on the Internet within the confines of their homes or other areas where there is an expectation of privacy. Patrons in the library also have the right to confidentiality and privacy in the use of electronic information networks to the extent possible given certain constraints such as proximity of other patrons and staff in a public setting. Users should be aware that the Internet is not a secure medium.

CHOOSING AND EVALUATING SOURCES

The patron is responsible at all times for the appropriate use of library computers and the Internet. Library computers and the Internet are an extension of the reference and research function of the Northport-East Northport Public Library, subject to the professional role of librarians in guiding what the institution offers in accordance with community standards. The Internet is a series of communication linkages leading to a highly diverse array of information content. Library patrons use it at their own risk. The Northport-East Northport Public Library chooses sources to link to from its homepage after individually evaluating their content and educational value. Beyond this, the Northport-East Northport Public Library is not responsible for the content of the Internet, changes in content of the sources to which the home pages link or for the content of the sources accessed through secondary links. In an effort to assist users, the Northport-East Northport Public Library has created web sites for the general population, teens and children to help guide them to sources that provide them with a wealth of information on the local, national and global level. In addition, the Northport-East Northport Public Library provides training to assist patrons in using the Internet in a safe, effective and efficient manner. However, as with any reference source, the patron must ultimately determine the accuracy and appropriate use of the information obtained.

ACCESS BY MINORS

Parents or legal guardians, not the Library or its staff, are responsible for library computer use and the information selected and/or accessed by their child. Patrons under eighteen years of age require a parent's or legal guardian's signature on the Library Card Application for general Internet access on library computers and library devices. Parents or legal guardians may select Access Level 3 for general Internet Access, Access Level 2 for restricted Internet access, or Access Level 1 for restricted Internet access with adult supervision. Guest patrons are limited to restricted Internet access. Computers for use by children are located in the Children's Room. Computers for use by patrons having completed fifth grade and who are not yet eighteen are available in the Teen Area. To address the issue of the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, and other forms of direct electronic communications, as well as the unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors, the Northport East Northport Public Library urges minors and their parents or legal guardians to review the safety guidelines posted at http://www.suffolk.lib.ny.us/youth/parenting.html under the heading titled "Internet Safety."

RULES GOVERNING USE
- Use of the library's Internet access, both wired and wireless, indicates agreement with the Northport-East Northport Public Library's Computer Use Policy.
- The New York State Legislature, in enacting New York's obscenity laws and numerous courts when interpreting such laws, have recognized the existence of community standards when defining what material is obscene or of a sexually-offensive nature. The Library Board of Trustees seeks to place reasonable restraints on the public display or distribution of certain materials, which, in their opinion, lack literary, artistic, political or scientific value.
- The Northport-East Northport Public Library has no control over the information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. Not all sources provide accurate, complete or current information. Patrons may find some material controversial or inappropriate.
- Patrons may not display, print, transmit or distribute threatening material; expressions of bigotry, racism or hate; obscene or sexually explicit material; or material protected by trade secret.
- The Northport-East Northport Public Library is guided by the following American Library Association statements on access to information: *The Library Bill of Rights, The Freedom to Read,* Interpretations of the *Library Bill of Rights: Free Access to Libraries for Minors* and *Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks.*
- Patrons should respect the privacy of others by not attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords or data belonging to others.
- Patrons must respect the privacy of other patrons using public access workstations by not interfering with their use.
- Refer to the Library's Policy on *Confidentiality of Library Records* for additional points on each user's right to privacy with respect to information sought or received and materials consulted, borrowed or acquired.
- Patron passwords are confidential and must be safeguarded at all times. Patrons should log off to a point that requires a new logon or, when available, lock their desktop before leaving a computer unattended. Passwords should not be shared with anyone.
- The library's wireless network is not secure. Information sent from or to your wireless device can be captured by anyone else with a wireless device and the appropriate software.
- The library assumes no responsibility for the safety of equipment or for wireless device configurations, security, or data loss resulting from connection to the library's network.

- Use of the Library's computers and network resources for commercial purposes is prohibited, including, but not limited to, unsolicited advertising.
- Any use of the Library's computers and network resources for unlawful purposes is prohibited.
- Patrons shall not copy or illegally download commercial software and must agree to abide by copyright law.
- Creation or installation of any virus or destructive program is prohibited.
- Patrons are not permitted to change, add, or remove hardware or software from Library computers. Tampering or altering library equipment or software is prohibited. Attempting to circumvent security or gain unauthorized access to any host, network, or computer located in the library or elsewhere is prohibited. Patrons shall not interfere with normal service of any host, network, or computer by intentionally crashing, disrupting, or overloading its operation.
- Library staff may provide basic computer instruction to individual patrons, based on staff availability. The Library does not assume any responsibly for any damage to patron hardware, software, or data.
- Library staff is not able to provide technical assistance beyond written instructions and cannot guarantee that you will be able to make a wireless connection.
- Library computers are intended to be used by one person at a time. If necessary, two people may sit together and work on the same computer as long as they do not disturb others.

The Board of Trustees of the Northport-East Northport Public Library reserves the right to change this policy at any time and you are advised to check with the library periodically for any changes. Your continued use of the library's computers and network resources will constitute your acceptance of such changes. The Library also reserves the right to terminate a patron's use if that individual is in violation of this policy.