

## **Library Policies of the Mercer Public Library**

### **XIV. Computer and Internet Use Policy**

The Mercer Public Library provides access to the internet as a means to enhance the information and learning opportunities for the citizens of the library's service area. The Board of Trustees has established the Internet Use Policy to ensure appropriate and effective use of this resource.

Unlike the selection of library materials on library shelves, librarians do not select the offerings of the internet. Because not all online resources are accurate and complete, and some sites may be offensive, library users are encouraged to exercise critical judgment in accessing information on the internet. Parents are responsible for their children's library computer use and should ensure that their children understand safe and responsible behavior on the internet.

The library is committed to providing its employees and patrons with an environment that is free from all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment; to prohibiting the display of obscene material, child pornography, and material that is harmful to minors; and to making every effort within constitutional limits to prevent minors from viewing harmful or illegal materials.

The library cannot assure that data or files downloaded by users are free of malicious software. The library is not responsible for damage to equipment or data on a user's personal computer from the use of data downloaded from the library's internet service.

Due to national security concerns, the library staff is unable to tell patrons if their internet viewing habits, passwords, or e-mails are being monitored by federal agents.

#### ***Internet Use Rules***

The following rules and procedures govern the use of the library's internet workstations:

- Access to the internet is available to all patrons. Use of the library's computers or internet connection implies acceptance of the Internet Use policy.
- Parents of minor children must assume responsibility for their children's use of the library's computer equipment.
- All access is available on a first-come, first-served basis. The library may place time limits on computer use during busy periods. Reservations or extended time periods may be allowed for special circumstances at the discretion of the library staff.
- All library computers use hard drive protection software to prevent the installation of new software or saving files. Patrons must provide portable storage (discs or flash drives) to save any files created or downloaded on the library's computers.
- Printing is available for a nominal fee.
- Library staff may be available to assist users and answer questions. However, they may not have time to provide in-depth instruction or technical assistance.
- Library staff will not assist any users with inputting personal legal or financial information, including but not limited to passwords, identification numbers, credit card numbers, tax information, bank account numbers, and employment applications.

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### *Responsibilities of Users*

Users at the Mercer Public Library computer workstations should bear in mind that the workstations are located in public areas shared by people of all ages and backgrounds. Library users are expected to respect the privacy of other library users and to show consideration for all users when viewing web pages.

No person shall use a library workstation or wireless internet service in a way that disturbs or interferes with users, employees, or operations of the library. **Patrons may not:**

- a. View, print, distribute, display, send, or receive images, text, or graphics of obscene materials or material that violates laws relating to child pornography.
- b. Disseminate or display to minors materials that may be harmful to minors. The display of obscene graphics or graphics that may be harmful to minors is illegal under Wisconsin Statutes 944.21 and 948.11.
- c. Transmit threatening or harassing material.
- d. Engage in any activity that is deliberately offensive or creates an intimidating or hostile environment.
- e. Violate copyright or software licensing agreements.
- f. Gain unauthorized access to any computing, information, or communications devices or resources.
- g. Damage or alter the library's computers, peripherals, software, or configurations.
- h. Create or distribute computer viruses or other malicious code.

### *Failure to Comply*

Failure to comply with this policy will result in:

- **1<sup>st</sup> offense:** Loss of computer privileges for 60 days. Parents/guardians of minors will be notified and if there is reason to believe that the Wisconsin Statutes have been violated, the proper authorities will be notified.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> offense:** Loss of computer privileges for 6 months. Parents/guardians of minors will be notified and if there is reason to believe that the Wisconsin Statutes have been violated, the proper authorities will be notified.
- **Any further violations** may lead to permanent loss of library privileges including the right to visit the building and grounds, per the *Loss of Library Privileges* policy in section III. **Patron Responsibilities and Conduct.**
- Any form of vandalism to the library's equipment will result in a fine of \$1,000 or replacement value of the equipment. Vandalism may include the installation of unauthorized passwords or malicious code. Vandalism may be reported to the Iron County Sheriff for investigation.