

## Internet Access Policy

### For the Public Libraries of Berks County

#### **Purpose**

The public libraries of Berks County are committed to the promotion of lifelong learning. As part of that commitment, the libraries will provide public access to the diverse and unique resources available via the Internet.

#### **Conditions and Terms of Use**

1. Information available via the Internet may be protected by copyrights or trademarks; use of such information must not violate any copyright or trademark law.
2. Because the Internet allows access to ideas, information, and commentary from sources around the world, the libraries cannot control its content. Therefore, individual users must accept responsibility for determining the validity and accuracy of information located on the Internet. The libraries are not responsible for any use made of information obtained from Internet resources.
3. The Internet and its available resources may contain material of a controversial nature. Parents or guardians, NOT library staff, are responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their children.
4. Viewing of certain materials in the public library may be considered improper in time, place, or manner. Libraries reserve the right to terminate an Internet session that disrupts library services, involves disruptive user behavior, or that violates the law.
5. Patrons may not use public library Internet connections for any commercial or for-profit purpose.
6. A fee for printouts will be charged.

#### **Children and the Internet**

The *Children's Internet Protection Act (pub.L. 106-554)* requires that a library receiving federal funds must "have in place a policy of Internet safety for minors that includes the operation of a technology protection measure with respect to any computers with Internet access. . . ." In compliance with this provision of federal law, the public libraries have installed a filtering mechanism on all computers to protect young users from inappropriate material.

Parents are reminded that filtering is not foolproof. It diminishes the likelihood that searchers will inadvertently retrieve text or images that they may find offensive, but does not completely eliminate that possibility. Filters may also block access to sites that users consider both inoffensive and useful. Parental supervision of young children searching the Internet is strongly advised.

#### **Rights of Adults**

Library staff is strictly prohibited from disabling the filter on patron-owned laptops or other wireless access devices.

## **Right to Privacy**

All library users have the right to expect their information-seeking activities in the library are private and confidential. No records are retained of Internet use by any identifiable minor or adult user.

Access to subscription services, e-mail; use of such web-based services as "Hotmail" may be permitted at the discretion of the local library.

## **User Responsibilities**

1. Users will sign an Internet use agreement; agreements for those under 18 years of age will require parent or guardian signature.
2. Users must observe time limits and other procedural guidelines set by individual libraries for use of the Internet terminals.
3. Users are responsible for damage to equipment beyond what occurs with normal usage; hardware and software may not be abused, modified, or destroyed.

## **Staff Assistance**

The library staff has received training in Internet searching and is capable of offering basic instruction in how to navigate. Library patrons should not expect staff members to guide them through every stage of a search; patrons must be willing to take the initiative and explore on their own.

## **Appeals**

The Library Director, or the library staff if the Library Director is unavailable, shall have the exclusive authority to enforce this policy. Any patron may appeal the application of the policy by the Library Director or Library Staff by notifying the Library Director and the President of the Board of Trustees in writing. The Board of Trustees shall then meet at a convenient time to decide the appeal.

*Revised & Approved 8/20/15*