Computer & Internet Access Policy

The Board of Trustees of the John Jermain Memorial Library recognizes that computers and the Internet have become essential research and educational tools in carrying out the Library's mission to assist people of all ages with current, high-interest materials and useful information in specific areas of knowledge in a variety of formats. The Trustees also recognize that through the Internet the Library is offering access to many valuable local, national and international sources of information, including ideas, commentary and a vast array of tools and resources appropriate for different age levels and points-of-view. Some of these sources may contain inaccurate, dated, controversial and even offensive material. The Internet is an unregulated, ungoverned, fluid source of information that is constantly changing. The Library neither endorses the viewpoints nor vouches for the accuracy of information obtained through the Internet. Further, we have no control over the information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. A knowledgeable information consumer must evaluate the validity and appropriateness of the information found there. That said it is our belief that every library user benefits from expanded access to information beyond the walls of the Library.

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 public access settings.

The Board of Trustees therefore enacts the following policy defining Internet access in the John Jermain Memorial Library:

1.   All users of electronic information resources such as the Internet are expected to use these resources in a responsible, ethical manner, consistent with the educational, informational and recreational purposes for which they are provided.

2.   By using the Library Internet stations, patrons indicate their agreement that these computers shall not be used to display, print, transmit or distribute threatening material; expressions of bigotry, racism or hate; obscene or sexually explicit material; or material protected by trade secret.

3.   Adult Patrons may use any available adult computer. Juvenile patrons under the age of eighteen years of age may use the computers in the children's area. Children under ten must be accompanied by an adult at the adult computers. Patrons without a library card will be given a temporary pass and their ID will be returned to them when they return the pass.

4.   If it is apparent that minors are not following these acceptable use guidelines, Library staff will intervene. It is not possible, however, for Library personnel to monitor all use. We cannot guarantee that children will never access inappropriate sites. We therefore require that parents take an active interest in and responsibility for their children's computer use.

5. Patrons are expected to:
   - Respect the privacy of others by not misrepresenting themselves as another user; by not attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords or data belonging to others; by not seeking unauthorized access to any computer system or damaging or altering software components of any network or database.
   - Not interfere with the use of public access workstations by others.
   - Leave the computer screen, hard drive and all settings (including the browser home page) exactly as they found it.

6. Patrons may not:
   - Send, receive or display text or graphics that may reasonably be construed as obscene, sexually explicit, or demeaning to any race, ethnic background, religion, disability, gender or lifestyle.
   - Use the Library public access stations or the Internet to conduct any business or commercial activity for financial gain.
   - Download files of any kind from a remote computer to a Library computer's hard drive.
   - Store files of any kind on a Library computer's hard drive. All files must be uploaded and stored on an external drive (i.e a "flash" or "thumb" drive) or to the cloud
     - Load paper in, or attempt to service Library printers.
     - Seek unauthorized access to any computer system.
   - Make any changes to the setup or configuration of the software or hardware.

7. Library staff will assist patrons with Internet use as time permits, but cannot offer personal instruction or assistance. Basic computer competence on the part of the patron is assumed.

8. Internet use may be limited to prescribed lengths of time to provide greater access for all patrons.

9. All fees for printing on the Library's printers will be posted in the printer area. Patrons may provide their own paper, but a member of the Library staff must approve its use. Only Library staff may load paper into the printers. The posted fee per page will still be charged for printing in order to cover the cost of toner or ink.

10. Misuse or abuse of the computers or Internet policy may result in termination of a user's session and/or suspension of Internet access or computer use privileges.

11. Violations of laws governing Internet use may result in criminal prosecution.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, March 17, 2004

AMENDED JULY 2022