

Pasco County Library System Policy Manual

Section: Public Services

Policy Title: Internet and Computer/Electronic Device Use
Policy

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Acceptance Statement:

The Pasco County Library System considers use of any public access computer or electronic device service in its facilities to constitute an acceptance of its Internet and Computer/Electronic Device Use Policy.

Philosophy:

The Library provides open access to the Internet as an integral part of its mission. The Library seeks to protect the First Amendment rights of its patrons and their individual right to privacy. The same standards of intellectual freedom, privacy, and confidentiality endorsed by the Pasco County Library System for traditional resources and services also apply to electronic media, including use of the Internet.

The Internet offers open access to information, ideas and commentary from around the world and a vast array of tools and resources for different age levels and points of view. However, not all sources on the Internet provide information that is accurate, complete, current, or legal. The Pasco County Library System does not endorse the viewpoints or vouch for the accuracy of information obtained through the Internet. The library does not monitor and has no control over the information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. Some resources may contain material that some patrons will find personally offensive or inappropriate for children.

Access, use, or dissemination of information via the Internet in the Library is the responsibility of the user. In the case of minors, it is a joint responsibility of the user and the parent or guardian.

Librarians cannot act in the place of parents in providing constant care and supervision of children as they explore the Internet. The responsibility for what minors read or view on the Internet rests with parents or guardians.

The following are recommended guidelines for parents and guardians to ensure that children have positive online experiences, whether at home or in the library.

- Provide guidelines for your children on the use of the Internet. Counsel them to avoid sites you consider unsuitable or harmful. Give them guidance in how to determine if a site falls into these categories.
- Instruct children NEVER to give out personal information (name, address, password, telephone number, credit card number) online.

- Teach children to be good online consumers. As with print information, consider the source, date, accuracy, and appropriateness of online information
- Provide specific guidance on the use of electronic mail, chat rooms, gaming, social networking, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Wireless Access:

- The Library's wireless network is not secure. Information sent to and from your wireless device can be captured by anyone else with a wireless device and the appropriate software.
- Library staff is not permitted to handle patron's personally owned computers, cards, wireless device or configuration. No guarantee can be provided that you will be able to make a wireless connection.
- Wi-Fi is accessible from most of the public areas. Due to the nature of the Wi-Fi signal there may be some "weak signal" areas.
- The Library accepts no liability for use of the wireless service.
- Patrons using wireless service with their personal equipment are expected to adhere to the same rules as patrons using Library-owned equipment.

Internet Filtering:

In accordance with the [Supreme Court decision in United States v. American Library Association, No. 02-361 \(June 23, 2003\)](#), "the CIPA decision," Internet access on all library computers is filtered. The full text of the [Children's Internet Protection Act \(CIPA\)](#) is available online. Filters are not perfect and parents should still guide their child's use of the Internet.

In accordance with [Section 112.22, Florida Statutes](#), all applications designated as "prohibited applications" are blocked through the filtering process. The full text of [Section 112.22, Florida Statutes](#) is available online.

Any patron 17 years old or older may request that the filter be disabled; however, this does not allow the patron to ignore any aspect of the Library's Internet Policy.

Any patron may request that the library review a specific site that they believe is blocked in error.

Internet Training and Instruction:

Providing instruction in how to use and evaluate informational resources is part of the Library's role. Staff will devote a reasonable amount of time assisting individual library patrons with the Internet where needed. They cannot devote large amounts of time to each customer because staff members are handling information requests from many individuals.

Regular programs, demonstrations, and hands-on sessions on the use of the Internet are provided by the library staff and are available to all patrons. Attendance at such programs may require sign-up in advance, depending on demand.

Acceptable Use of Computers/Electronic Devices:

Users of Library electronic resources must comply with federal and state laws, library rules and policies, and the terms of applicable contracts including software licenses while using library electronic resources. Examples of applicable laws, rules and policies include the laws of libel, privacy, copyright, trademark, obscenity and child pornography; the Florida Computer Crimes Act, the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, and the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, which prohibits "hacking", "cracking", key-stroke capture, and similar activities. Users who engage in electronic communications with persons in other states or countries or on other systems or networks may also be subject to the laws of those jurisdictions and the rules and policies of those other systems and networks.

Users must not use computing resources to gain unauthorized access to local or remote computers or electronic devices or to impair or damage the operations of library computers, electronic devices, networks, workstations, or peripherals. This includes blocking communication lines and running, installing, or sharing virus programs. Deliberate attempts to circumvent data protection or other security measures are not allowed.

Patrons may not install their personal software or hardware on the Library's computers, electronic devices or network with the following exception: Hardware that uses a USB port, such as a digital camera, ZIP drive, jump drive, or portable CD burner, but does not require a separate power source, such as an electrical plug, and does not require that software be loaded to the computer or electronic device, may be used.

Under no circumstances may patrons utilize library computers or electronic devices to discover or steal personal information from other computer users. Such information includes, but is not limited to, passwords, email addresses, phone numbers, and credit card numbers.

To protect the integrity and security of the library's hardware and software, administrative access to any library computer, electronic device, or related equipment is never granted under any circumstances.

Patrons should notify library staff immediately if they experience any problems with the library's equipment or software.

The library accepts no responsibility or liability for patron's personal equipment utilized in the library.

Conditions of Availability:

Depending upon the demand placed on Internet resources at any particular library agency, users may have to sign up for a limited number of time slots per day. If this is required, users must sign up in person. Reservations will not be taken over the phone.

The library cannot provide a computer or electronic device for exclusive use of any kind. All policies regarding computer or electronic device use, including any time-limits, apply equally to all library patrons.

Some computer equipment or electronic devices may have been purchased with Grant funds for use with specific Library programs or services or may be associated with specific partnership programs. Such equipment may not be available for general use. Users may download

information from the Internet to their own e-mail accounts, to a storage media of their own, or to storage media purchased in the library.

Printers are provided for library owned Internet computer or electronic devices. Due to the increased cost of printer paper, patrons are required to pay a nominal fee for printing.

Information on this fee is posted at each printer.

Library computers and electronic devices are configured to meet the needs of the majority of patrons. Special software or functionality cannot be provided for unusual needs of individual users.

In certain areas of the libraries, computers are designated for specific age groups. Computers in the children's areas are to be utilized by children only. The only exception to this policy is that parents and legal guardians accompanied by children may use these designated computers.

Computers located in the teen areas are to be utilized only by teens. The Branch Manager or designee, at their discretion, may grant an exception to this policy.

As the Children's Internet Protection Act specifically addresses images that may be harmful to minors, M (Mature)-rated and above games are not allowed to be played during normal hours of operation. Other games may have content that is offensive or harmful to minors. Library staff has been entrusted with the authority and responsibility of monitoring the use of games in the Library and discontinuing use of any that might be in these categories.

Rules of Conduct:

The Pasco County Library System policy on patron conduct applies to the use of all computer and electronic device services offered by the library. In addition:

- Internet computers or electronic devices will not be used for illegal activity, to access illegal materials, or to access materials that, by local community standards, would be obscene.

- Users are not permitted to behave in a way that intrudes upon the rights of others. Users are not permitted to invade the privacy of other library patrons, or to harass or bully library staff or patrons.
- Installation, downloading, or modification of software on library owned computers or electronic devices are prohibited.
- Users will respect copyright laws and licensing agreements.
- Users will not make any attempt to gain unauthorized access to restricted files or networks, or to damage or modify computer equipment or software.
- Users must end their session and leave the computer when asked to do so by authorized library staff.
- Because the public computers and wireless access are located in public areas, what the user views is not private. In accordance with Florida Statutes, Chapters 847.011 (1)a and 847.0133(1), displaying obscene material to minors or printing such materials may be a violation of the law and could result in penalties up to and including imprisonment.
- Display of images that are harmful to minors on any library-owned or personally owned electronic device is prohibited under the Children’s Internet Protection Act. (see above for more information)

Violation of Policy:

Library employees are authorized to terminate any user’s access session, or to prohibit a user from subsequent access sessions, for a reasonable period from the date of informing the user of that action, given cause to believe that the user has failed to comply with the Library’s Internet and Computer/Electronic Device Use Policy. Such prohibition of use at any Pasco County Library System facility will be effective at all Pasco County Library System facilities.

Repeated violations of, or a single egregious violation of, this policy could result in being permanently barred from all County libraries.