

Internet Safety Policy

Overview

The Cheshire Public Library is committed to its role of serving the information and lifelong learning needs of its patrons. Providing access to the Internet enables the Library to greatly expand its information services beyond the traditional collections and resources. However, not all sources on the Internet provide information that is accurate, complete, current or legal. Minors may be able to access inappropriate material and users of the Internet may be exposed to unlawful attempts by others to access their personal identification information.

Therefore, and as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) in order to receive certain federal funds, the Cheshire Public Library's Internet Safety Policy is intended to: (a) protect against access by staff and patrons, both minors and adults, to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors as defined by federal law; (b) promote the safety and security of all Internet users, including minors, when using electronic mail, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communication; (c) guard against unauthorized online disclosure, use or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; (d) prevent unauthorized online access to the Library's computer networks, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful online activities by all Internet users including minors.

Access to Inappropriate Material

As required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, to the extent practical, technology protection measures (Internet filters) will be used on all of the Library's Internet accessible computers and Wi-Fi networks. The filtering software protects against access to visual depictions of obscenity, child pornography, and materials that are deemed harmful to minors as defined by the federal criminal definitions. Users should be aware that the Library cannot and does not guarantee that the filtering software will block all visual depictions of obscenity, child pornography, or materials that are deemed harmful to minors and should not be considered a substitute for individual judgement and/or parental oversight. Nor can the Library guarantee that the technology protection measures will not restrict access to sites that may have legitimate research or other value. As the law requires, Library Staff will disable technology protection measures for persons 18 or older who request it for bona fide research or any other lawful purposes. In the case of minors, Library staff may unblock appropriate sites needed for bona fide research or other lawful purposes. Disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall only be done by Library staff or other designated representative.

Inappropriate Network Use

Unauthorized access to the Library's computers, databases, network, hardware or software setting is prohibited. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, inappropriate network use includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors. Damage to Library computer and Internet resources by users including unauthorized attempts to disable or modify technology protection measures are prohibited.

Education, Supervision and Monitoring

It shall be the responsibility of Library staff to educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the Library's Internet accessible computers and Wi-Fi networks in accordance with this policy. Library staff will provide all users with information designed to promote safe and secure computer use. This includes safety tips for using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications, and steps users can take to prevent unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information.

In the case of minors, parents or legal guardians must assume responsibility for deciding which library resources are appropriate for their own children. Parents or legal guardians should guide their children in use of the Internet and inform them about materials they should not use. Parents and guardians are encouraged to educate themselves about Internet safety. Library staff are available to provide more information to parents, legal guardians and minors.

User Security

Users of the Library's Internet accessible computers or Wi-Fi networks should be aware that no technology protection measures are fool proof and third parties may be able to obtain information regarding users' activities. The Library will not release information on the use of specific Internet resources by members of the public except as required by law or necessary for the proper operation of the Library. However, the Library is not and cannot be responsible for maintaining the privacy or confidentiality of personal identification information provided by a user to a third party via the Internet.

All material that is electronically stored on the Library's equipment is the property of the Town. The Library shall access, review, edit, and delete all user files and any material stored on any system provided by the Library.

Compliance

The use of the Cheshire Public Library's resources is a privilege, not a right. Any user of electronic information resources and computer networks who is found to have violated any provision of this policy shall be subject to progressive disciplinary action, which may ultimately lead to suspension or revocation of Library privileges.

Amendments

The Library reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend this policy and to modify and suspend Internet use privileges.