

## **Cherokee Regional Library System INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

### **Purpose**

The Cherokee Regional Library System provides filtered access to the Internet as a means of fulfilling its mission to collect, organize and make accessible informational, educational, recreational and cultural resources to meet the changing needs of its patrons of all ages and cultural and economic backgrounds. The Board of Trustees supports the idea that all members of the community have free and equal access to the entire range of library resources, regardless of content, approach, format or amount of detail. These rights extend to all users of the public library, including minors. The Board of Trustees is committed to making information available to its patrons in a variety of formats—from traditional print and audiovisual materials to the latest in electronically accessed materials. The computers provided by the Cherokee Regional Library System are intended to integrate electronic resources and, by doing so, enable the library system to provide information beyond the boundaries of its own collection.

### **Responsibility of the Library**

At present, the Internet is an unregulated and rapidly changing medium. It contains a wealth of diverse material that is personally, professionally and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages, but it also contains materials that may be offensive, controversial, disturbing, illegal, harmful to minors, inaccurate or incomplete. Congress has enacted the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), which went into effect on April 20, 2001. The law mandates Internet filtering for public libraries in an attempt to protect minors from illegal obscenity and child pornography as well as material considered "harmful to minors" as defined under Georgia law. The Cherokee Regional Library System, in compliance with this law, uses the statewide filtering system on all public computers in the library. Parents should recognize, however, that this software may filter out inappropriate images, but generally *not* inappropriate text. Filtering software also blocks some websites that do not contain objectionable material and fails to block some websites that do contain objectionable material. In other words, filters provide only a limited measure of protection from inappropriate Internet content. Parents should be aware of this and carefully monitor their children's access.

The Cherokee Regional Library System has no control over information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. Provision of Internet access by the Cherokee Regional Library System does not constitute an endorsement of any particular information contained on the Internet. The Cherokee Regional Library System, moreover, shall have no liability for direct, indirect or consequential damages related to the use of

information accessed on the Internet from library equipment. Library patrons use the Internet at their own risk. Users, therefore, are encouraged to evaluate carefully the validity of information obtained from the Internet.

Internet computers shall not be used for illegal activity, to access illegal materials, or to access materials that by local community standards would be obscene. Library employees are authorized to take prompt and appropriate actions to enforce the Rules of Conduct, and/or to prohibit use by persons who fail to comply with the Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Responsibility of Patrons and Parents of Minors**

Individuals must accept responsibility for determining what is or is not appropriate. The Cherokee Regional Library System upholds and affirms the right of each individual to have access to constitutionally protected materials and also affirms the right and responsibility of parents to determine and monitor their children's use of library materials and resources.

Children under the age of 18 may use the Internet *only* with the permission of a parent or legal guardian. This approval allows the child to use the Internet in the library, whether or not a parent or guardian is with him/her. Parents and guardians are encouraged to work closely with their children in the library and particularly on the Internet. Parents are urged to monitor and supervise their children's use of the Internet in selecting material that is consistent with personal and family values and is appropriate for the age and understanding of their children. Parents and guardians who wish to limit or restrict the access of their own children must personally oversee their children's use of the Internet and other forms of electronic information.

The library strongly recommends that a parent or legal guardian supervise children under the age of 18 years at all times during use of computers accessing the Internet. Although the Cherokee Regional Library System offers filtered access to the Internet, it does not and cannot provide monitoring or supervision of children. Parents are encouraged to read "Librarian's Guide to Cyberspace for Parents & Kids," copies of which are available free from any library location or at [www.ala.org/parentspage/greatsites/guide.html](http://www.ala.org/parentspage/greatsites/guide.html). Minors who visit the library without a parent or guardian are responsible for their own decisions and behavior and may be denied access to the Internet if the library staff deems it prudent to do so.

In order to use library Internet computers, patrons must have an active, current PINES (Public Information Network for Electronic Services) card in good standing. They must also have read the *Internet Acceptable Use Policy* and have initialed on the registration card indicating that s/he wants Internet access.

Patrons under the age of 18 years must have the permission of a parent or legal guardian before they will be permitted to access the Internet. The parent or guardian must also verify the minor's age. The parent or legal guardian must

read the *Internet Acceptable Use Policy* and indicate his/her approval for the child to use the Internet by initialing the appropriate space on the application for the child's library card. This approval will be noted on the child's record in the computer, and it will appear on the computer screen when the child signs out a computer. Library staff is available to provide assistance and to help identify age-appropriate websites for children accessing the Internet.

### **Exercise Caution During Internet Use**

Internet users are reminded that:

1. Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete or current information.
2. Public library computer terminals are neither private nor secure.
3. Users are financially responsible for any charges that they may incur from their use of the Internet.
4. Users should exercise extreme caution about revealing any personal identification information (e.g., name, address, telephone number, email address, social security number, age, or credit card number) over the Internet. Minors should **NEVER** disclose any personal identification information over the Internet.
5. The patron may not be able always to go to the places on the Internet s/he wants to visit. There are many reasons for this; among them are:
  - there are too many Internet visitors and the host computer has closed or limited access from the "outside world"
  - the database or resource is licensed to a particular institution, in which case the patron would need to be affiliated with the institution in order to get access
  - the host computer has changed its address or has closed down
  - the library's Internet connection may be periodically and temporarily inoperable due to technical difficulties
6. If you receive an email message from a person unknown to you or from an unfamiliar email address, the best and safest policy is to delete it before opening or reading it.

### **Rules of Conduct for Use of Library Computers**

1. Internet computers shall not be used for illegal activity, to access illegal materials, to access child pornography, or to access materials that by local community standards would be obscene. The library reserves the right to enforce this policy. Library staff will give only one warning; after that, Internet privileges will be suspended. It is not our intention to censor, but

we are a public facility and must attempt to insure that all patrons are comfortable with materials or information on monitors to which they may be passively exposed.

2. Transmitting and/or receiving obscene materials and/or child pornography is a violation of law and is not permitted under any circumstances. Violation of this rule will subject a patron to criminal prosecution and result in immediate and permanent loss of library Internet access privileges.
3. Minors, whether or not accompanied by a parent or guardian, shall not use computers for any illegal activity, or to access illegal materials, child pornography, obscene materials, or materials "harmful to minors" as currently defined by law. (See definitions in #22, below.) Violations of this rule may subject a patron to criminal prosecution and will result in immediate loss of library Internet access privileges.
4. Parents and/or guardians are responsible for monitoring the use of e-mail and the Internet by their minor children.
5. Installation, downloading, or modification of software is prohibited. A patron may not use his/her own software programs on any of the library's computers.
6. Users shall respect copyright laws and licensing agreements.
7. Users shall not make any attempt to gain unauthorized access to restricted computer files or networks, or to damage or modify computer equipment or software.
8. Modification or circumvention of filtering software is prohibited. Violations of this rule may result in loss of library Internet access privileges.
9. Patrons may print from all public access computers. Please check with the circulation desk for the current fee schedule for printing black and white and color copies. Prompt payment is required by users who incur charges for printing or other authorized fees.
10. Diskettes, flashdrives, and CDs, that can be used to save files may be purchased at the circulation desk.
11. Users shall sign up in person to use the Internet on a "next available terminal" basis. Terminals may not be "reserved" for other persons and will not be held for persons who are not in the immediate vicinity when their name is called. Telephone reservations will not be taken.
12. All users of the Internet computers must sign in at the circulation desk and use their library card to check out a computer for use. Users must sign out at the completion of their Internet computer time.

13. Use of the Internet computers is on a first-come, first-served basis. From the time the library opens until 3:00 p.m., those using the Internet computers will be given a two-hour assignment for uninterrupted use. Use of the computers after 3:00 p.m. and until 15 minutes before closing time is limited to one hour of uninterrupted use. If no one is waiting, the patron may continue to use the computer until someone requests it. In the event all computers are in use, each patron shall be limited to one use period per day.
14. Users must end their session and leave the terminal when asked to do so by authorized library staff.
15. The number of Internet access sessions available per day, per user, may be established by the staff person in charge. Such limitations will be dependent on facility-specific demand in order to provide access for the majority of users.
16. Users shall respect the privacy of other users and shall refrain from attempting to view or read material being used by others, as well as to censor or comment on what others are viewing.
17. The library's computers are set up for optimal usage by a single individual. With the exception of a minor who is accompanied by a parent or guardian during Internet access, only one user per computer terminal is permitted.
18. Computers may be used for educational, informational and recreational purposes only.
19. Misuse of library computers will result in the loss of computer privileges, potential loss of library privileges and possible prosecution. Such misuse includes, but is not limited to,
  - using the computer for illegal activities
  - hacking into the library computer system or any other computer system
  - damaging or attempting to damage computer equipment or software
  - interfering with systems operations, integrity or security
  - gaining unauthorized access to another person's files
  - sending harassing messages
  - viewing explicit sexual material
  - altering or attempting to alter the library's computer settings, and
  - violating copyright laws and software licensing agreements.
20. Use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Violations of these Rules may result in the loss of computer privileges. Unless otherwise provided, a patron will receive a warning for a first offense; a second offense will

result in a temporary loss of Internet access privileges for a period of two weeks; a third offense will result in a permanent loss of Internet access privileges.

21. The library does not endorse the services of any E-mail provider. Additionally, the Library does not accept responsibility for the technical support of e-mail services or for the security of e-mail messages.

22. Definitions:

- (a) "Minor" is a person under 18 years of age. Official Code of Georgia Annotated §16-12-102(3).
- (b) "Harmful to minors" is defined as per current Georgia law. O.C.G.A. §16-12-102.
- (c) "Inappropriate matter" for minors is material that is obscene as defined under Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §16-12-80), child pornography as defined under federal and/or state law (18 U.S.C. §2256; O.C.G.A. § 16-12-100), and material that is "harmful to minors" as defined in Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §16-12-102).

### **Termination or Prohibition of Access**

Library employees are authorized to terminate any user's access session, or to prohibit a user from subsequent access sessions for up to two weeks from the date of informing the user of that action, given cause to believe that the user has failed to comply with the Internet Acceptable Use Policy and/or Rules.

### **Right of Appeal**

An Internet user whose access session has been terminated or whose Internet access has been prohibited shall have the right to appeal and/or request that Internet access privileges be reinstated. An appeal must be in writing and submitted to the Library Director within five days of the termination or prohibition. Within ten days of receipt of the appeal, the Library Director shall review the matter and notify the patron in writing of his/her decision. If the Library Director's decision is adverse to the patron, the patron may appeal in writing within five days to the library's Board of Trustees, which shall thereafter consider the matter and issue its decision in writing within 30 days of receipt. No further appeals shall be considered. Temporary or permanent denial of Internet privileges at any Cherokee Regional Library System facility will be effective at all Cherokee Regional Library System facilities.