

Woodgate Library Internet/Computer Usage Policy

In accordance with its stated mission to develop the resources that enable us to serve as the source of information for our community, the Woodgate Free Library is committed to supplementing its traditional print resources with access to electronic information sources such as the Internet. The Internet is a vast global electronic network, which allows the user to search local, national, and international sites for information, ideas or opinions on a nearly infinite variety of topics. Because the Internet is enormous in its scope, is continuously changing and is unmonitored by any single agency or authority, the Library is unable to guarantee the accuracy, currency or completeness of the information accessed. In addition, some sites may carry information that users may regard as inappropriate or controversial. The Library is neither responsible nor liable for the content of Internet sites. Realizing that each person encountering new ideas brings to the encounter their own standards and perceptions, the Library reminds Internet users that they access the network at their own discretion.

Children's Use of the Internet

The Woodgate Free Library agrees with the view of the American Library Association, as stated in the Library Bill of Rights, that "a person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background or views." Although the Library recognizes that patrons may encounter sites on the Internet that they regard as objectionable, offensive or possessed of content they deem inappropriate for children, the staff cannot monitor children as they explore the information resources, either print or electronic, available in the Library. That type of supervision is the right and responsibility of the child's parent or legal guardian. We expect that parents or caretakers of children will guide them in their exploration of the Internet in the same way that they provide guidance in the child's choice of reading, listening or viewing other materials.

Filtering Software

Filtering software has been installed on all computers within the Library. Adult patrons who find that they are unable to access needed online material may request a user code to circumvent the filtering. The sites and activities described in the next section are prohibited.

Restrictions/Illegal Activities

Library patrons are expected to comply with all local, state and federal laws while using the Internet. Library policies on the proper use of materials also apply to electronic resources. Illegal or restricted activities include:

- Accessing "obscene material," as defined by state and federal law.
- Damaging computer equipment or software; degradation of system performance.
- "Hacking" or alteration or destruction of software configurations.
- Violation of Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code) or software licensing agreements.
- Use of workstations or networks to circumvent or violate local, state, federal or international laws.
- Engaging in any activity that is disruptive, libelous or slanderous to other persons.
- Engaging in commercial activities involving on-line financial transactions, which may incur costs to the Library.

Failure to adhere to these restrictions and prohibitions may result in the suspension of Internet and/or Library use privileges and could also subject the user to prosecution under local, state, or federal law. Any Library patron whose Library privileges are restricted or denied may appeal the restriction or denial to the Library's Board of Trustees by submitting a written appeal to the President of the Board with a copy to the Library director.

Time Limits

Because the Library is able to offer only a limited number of link-ups to the Internet, the Library reserves the right to impose time limits on patrons' use of the Library's computers.

Privacy

The Library cannot guarantee the privacy of patrons accessing the Internet, because the Library's computers are in public places and the Library's registration system provides staff access to the sites that are searched.

Staff Assistance

The Library staff is able to assist patrons with basic log-on and maneuvering strategies within the Internet but cannot provide extensive personal instruction on demand. Patrons requiring comprehensive instruction are encouraged to register for technology classes or tutoring sessions. The staff is willing to assist patrons using their own computers, tablets or mobile devices. Staff will work on non-Library equipment only under patron direction, and neither the Library nor its staff can be held liable if the patron's equipment is damaged.