

Seward Memorial Library
Public Internet and Computer Acceptable Use Policy

A. Purpose Statement

“The Seward Memorial Library provides equitable access to materials, programs, and services that satisfy our community’s diverse informational and recreational interests” (Mission Statement approved by the Seward Memorial Library Board). Access to the Internet is provided as one means of fulfilling this mission. All Internet resources accessible through the Library are, within legal limits including the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), provided equally to all users, with the understanding that it is the individual user’s responsibility to demonstrate judgment, respect for others, and appropriate conduct while using Seward Memorial Library resources and facilities.

B. Responsibility of the Library

The Seward Memorial Library does not monitor and has no control over the information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. The Internet is a global entity with a highly diverse user population and Library patrons use it at their own risk.

Patrons may access the library’s Internet connection via library owned or personal devices only if current requirements for technology protection measures are satisfied. As of July 1, 2004, the Seward Memorial Library, in compliance with CIPA, has installed a technology protection measure (TPM or filtering software) on all library computers that have Internet access. Access to the library’s Internet connection by patrons using wired personal devices is regulated similar to patron use of library computers. Patrons who access the Internet using personal devices with wireless connectivity must still abide by all other library guidelines.

Compliance with CIPA mandates measures to restrict access by any patron to visual depictions of child pornography or other sites that are defined as obscene, and to restrict access to sites deemed harmful to all patrons under age 17. CIPA defines harmful to minors as any picture, graphic image file or other visual depiction that: a) taken as a whole, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion; b) depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and c) taken as whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. Because no TPM can currently evaluate and block images, the least restrictive software blocking categories that by their definitions appear to include prohibited visual depictions will be used.

In accordance with the Supreme Court ruling of June 23, 2003 in relation to CIPA, library staff will disable the filtering device to provide patrons, age 17 and above,

access to sites needed for bona fide research or other lawful purposes. These patrons must provide proof of birth date to the staff, upon request, when they request the filter to be disabled.

To assure that patrons of all ages are able to access Internet sites that have been mistakenly blocked, the library will provide a method by which patrons can request that such sites be unblocked and staff will address the request in a timely manner.

The library, having installed and enforced the operation of a TPM in compliance with CIPA, will have no liability for damages related to the operation of, or failure of, the filtering software, or for its circumvention by users.

The Seward Memorial Library upholds the right of confidentiality and privacy for all library users. In order to protect the privacy of the user and the interests of other library patrons, the Library will manage access to the Internet by the use of privacy screens, judicious placement of the terminals, or other appropriate means.

Library staff cannot be responsible for providing in-depth training on the Internet or other computer functions. However, authorized staff will do its best to introduce to the computer users the basics of the Internet or other in-house computer programs and they may be able to answer simple questions. Because of library staff schedules, computer or Internet trained staff may not always be available.

C. Responsibilities of Computer Users

Library computers and/or the Internet will not be used by anyone, including minors (defined as under 17 by CIPA), for illegal activity, or to access illegal materials. Library customers who encounter behavior from others that violates library policy should report it to library staff. 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 as stated or implied herein.

Parents (including legal guardians), not the Library or its staff, are responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their children. Parents – and only parents – may restrict their children – and only their children – from access to Internet resources available through the Library. Parents, if they have concerns about what is accessible on the Internet, are encouraged to supervise in person their child's Internet sessions, and/or to ask Library staff to place an Internet restriction on their library card so their child abides by their wishes. Parents may choose to deny their child's access to the Internet, may restrict their child to use only when parents are present, or may choose to do nothing which places the responsibility for Internet choices with their child. The Library staff will not supervise Internet sessions of any patron, regardless of age.

Patrons must exercise caution when using the Internet to avoid unauthorized

disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information. Parents should caution their minor children against sharing personal facts on the Internet.

Internet users should remember to be good online consumers. As with print information, consider the source, date, and accuracy of online information. Although the Internet provides users with a wide array of excellent information, it also contains information that may be inaccurate, outdated, or personally offensive. Use information found on the Internet only after evaluating its quality.

Patrons who are 17 and older are responsible for determining their need to have the TPM disabled and to make such request of staff. When finished with their session, these patrons must restart their computers to insure filters are enabled for the next patron. Failure to do this may result in permanent loss of computer privileges. CIPA requires that everyone age 16 and under use computers with the TPM enabled; parents may not authorize that they be disabled for their children.

Users should be aware of the limitations of Internet filtering devices. While designed to restrict access to Internet content that could be deemed inappropriate, these systems are no substitute for individual judgment and/or parental involvement and oversight. Filters may block sites which have legitimate research value, as well as allowing some content through which some may find objectionable.

D. Rules of Conduct

1. When current requirements for technology protection measures are satisfied, patrons with library or computer use accounts in good standing may request access to library computers or the library's Internet connection. Visitors may be granted access to library computers or Internet connection using a temporary guest pass.
2. The library's computers and/or Internet connection will not be used for illegal activity, or to access illegal materials.
3. Library owned software will be handled by library staff only.
4. Circulating software is not available for use in the technology lab.
5. Users will respect copyright laws and licensing agreements.
6. Users will not make any attempt to gain unauthorized access to local or remote restricted files or networks, or to damage or modify computer equipment or software. Deliberate attempts to circumvent data protection, TPM or filtering software or other security measures are not allowed. Users must restart their machines at the end of every session.
7. Prompt payment is required when charges for printing (from Internet, word

processing document, or any other source) or other fees are incurred. Charges for black ink copies are 10 cents a page and for color copies are 75 cents a page.

8. Users must sign up to use public computers on a next-available basis and are allotted a minimum of one hour. Upon staff discretion, the minimum guaranteed time on schooldays from 3:30-6:00 p.m. may be shortened to 30 minutes. Users must end their session and leave the terminal or port when asked to do so by authorized Library staff, even if they have not completed their session.
9. Reasons for termination of session include, but are not limited to, behavior disturbing library patrons or staff, misuse of computer, improper disabling of TPM or filtering software, damaging library property, illegal activity, etc.
10. Users will respect the privacy of other users, and will refrain from attempting to view or read material being used by others.
11. Library staff may limit the number of users at any station based on the disruption the users cause to normal library service (examples of unacceptable action listed in number 9).
12. All library policies relating to behavior in the library apply to computer users. Computer users must comply with all applicable city, state, and federal laws. Examples of laws that may apply include libel, privacy, copyright, trademark, computer fraud, spamming, and child pornography. This list of examples is not exhaustive, but is intended to illustrate the kinds of laws that may apply to computer users in the Seward Library.

E. Termination or Prohibition of User Access

If a Library employee believes a user has failed to comply with the “Internet Acceptable Use Policy” and/or the “Rules of Conduct,” the computer user may be barred from the current or subsequent sessions for up to two weeks from the date of informing the user of that action. After presentation of the user’s actions to the Library Board, a patron may be required to pay for repair costs due to actions of vandalism, or may be permanently barred from further computer access at the Library.

Internet users whose access has been terminated or prohibited may protest the action and/or request that computer access privileges be reinstated using the regular complaint form and procedure in place.

F. Acceptance

The Seward Memorial Library considers use of any public access computer in its

facilities to constitute an acceptance of its Internet Use Policy, including the Rules of Conduct as posted in the computer area.