

PAULINE HAASS PUBLIC LIBRARY

POLICY: Public Internet Access

Adopted by Library Board: November 17, 2021

I. Scope of Policy

The Pauline Haass Public Library serves as a gateway to lifelong learning and community engagement. The mission is to connect people to information, ideas, and one another in a vibrant, welcoming, community-responsive environment.

The primary purpose of Internet access at the library is to further that mission. Although the Internet can be used for a variety of purposes, use of the Internet at the library is intended only for those functions which are appropriate to its mission.

II. Responsible Use

The Internet provides access to a massive body of information. This expands the library's information services beyond its physical collections and electronic resources. The Internet is also a rapidly changing environment, and therefore the library cannot monitor or control the information available on the Internet and is not responsible for its content beyond the library's own website. Users are responsible for determining that the information they access is acceptable, reliable, suitable to their needs, and complies with this policy and accompanying guidelines.

Responsibility for the use of the Library's Internet stations by children and young adults rests with their parents or legal guardians. Parents are strongly encouraged to discuss appropriate use of Internet resources with their children and to supervise their children's Internet sessions at the Library.

Internet users need to be aware that they may find material online that they consider offensive, just as they might find objectionable material in other formats such as books or videos. This includes sexually explicit material and materials of questionable accuracy. Just as the library does not endorse the viewpoints of written and recorded material in its collections, it does not do so for electronic information.

III. Confidentiality and Security of Electronic Information

Library users have the right to confidentiality and privacy. However, Internet users are advised that because security is technologically difficult to achieve, electronic transactions and files could become public. The Internet is not a secure medium and third parties may be able to obtain information about users' activities. Please use caution before providing any personal information over the Internet. Patrons are responsible for ensuring that their personal devices have security protection against viruses and other malware. You use the library's wireless network and/or computer workstations at your own risk. In accordance with the library's policy on Privacy of Library Records and Library Use, the USA Patriot Act, and Wis. State Statutes 43.30, the Library will release records only as required by the law.

See the library's policy on Privacy of Library Records and Library Use for more information in relation to patron privacy.

IV. Acceptable Use Rules

1. Users shall observe the Internet procedures and regulations of the Pauline Haass Public Library. The library staff has developed procedural restrictions, which may change with time and circumstances, necessary to allow for equitable and responsible use of the Internet. All persons using the Internet workstation must sign in with their own library card number (or provide personal identification as a guest). Users must read and accept the Acceptable User Rules (as contained in this policy) which are displayed on the Internet terminal screens. Misuse of the library's computers or any violation of this policy and procedures may result in the loss of Internet privileges, loss of library privileges, and/or criminal prosecution.
2. Users shall observe all federal, state, and municipal laws and regulations. Illegal use of the Internet is prohibited and subject to prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities.
3. Children under age 12 may not use the Internet terminals in the adult area of the library unless sharing a single terminal with a supervising adult. Children under age 12 may use the Internet terminals in the Youth Services area. The Youth Services terminals open to a home page which is designed to guide children to child-friendly websites. Children age 7 and under must be accompanied by a supervising adult when using an Internet terminal, to assure proper use of the equipment.
4. The Internet workstations in the Youth Room are for use by children and the adults who are supervising them in the room. Children have priority at these workstations, so an adult may be asked to end his or her session if a child is waiting. Adults using these workstations are expected to be sensitive to the presence of children in the room and may be asked to use an adult workstation if the site(s) they are viewing are deemed by staff to be inappropriate for children.
5. Library staff will not assist a child under the age of 12 in setting up an email account.
6. Minors are strongly admonished, for safety reasons, to not reveal any personal identification information (name, address, telephone number, email address, etc.) to unknown persons or through websites on the Internet. No other person may, without consent, disclose, use, or disseminate personal identification information about a minor.
7. Adults who are *not* accompanying children who are using the Youth Room must use the workstations in the adult area, rather than those in the Youth Room.

An Adult who is using an Internet workstation in the adult area, and who is accompanied by a child under the age of 12, may be asked to move to the Youth Room if the child is disruptive.

8. Internet computers shall not be used for illegal activities, to access illegal materials, or to access materials that may be reasonably construed as obscene. Transmitting and/or receiving of child pornography is a crime.
9. Examples of unacceptable uses include, but are not limited to: accessing files, passwords, or data belonging to others without their permission; damaging or altering hardware or software; unauthorized reproducing of copyrighted, licensed, or other protected material; misrepresenting oneself as another user; harassing or interfering with other users; and violating applicable local, state, federal, or international laws.
10. 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, materials “harmful to minors” as defined by Sec. 948.11 of the Wisconsin Statute. Beyond these restrictions and others in this policy, determination of what is inappropriate for a minor rests with his or her parent or legal guardian.
11. Adults shall not expose minors to materials defined as “harmful to minors” by Sec. 948.11 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Because minors use the library during all open hours, and an Internet user cannot be aware of who may be viewing his or her screen, viewing these materials is never allowed.
12. Staff will monitor use of Internet workstations to ensure compliance with this policy. Because security of files is technologically difficult to achieve, and the scope of law enforcement searches varies, Internet users are advised that electronic transactions and files could become public.
13. Library users whose accounts are blocked due to referral to a collection agency or late fees/damages in excess of the allowable threshold stipulated in the Circulation Policy, are prohibited from Internet use until the collection account is cleared and late fees/damages are brought below the threshold. Staff members will assist such users in meeting their information needs, just as they would assist any customer.
14. The Library is not responsible for loss or damage to user hardware, software, or data.

This policy will be reviewed and updated by the Library Board of Trustees at least every three years or as needed.

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