Internet Safety Policy

Internet Policy Mission

The Irondale Public Library is pleased to make available to the citizens of the City of Irondale and Jefferson County as well as the Library staff, access to the Internet, through the interconnected computer network within Jefferson County. This worldwide network provides various means of accessing significant educational and recreational materials.

Internet Access

This is the Internet Safety Policy of the Irondale Public Library. The host site for our Internet access is the Jefferson County Library Cooperative. JCLC is the countywide, non-profit organization dedicated to providing internet access and many other services to public libraries around Jefferson County.

The internet is a worldwide network of computer networks and is an essential medium for obtaining and transmitting information of all types. Therefore, public access to the Internet is germane to the Library's mission.

The Internet is an unregulated medium. It also provides access to information that is inaccurate, illegal or that some may find offensive or disturbing. The Library will identify on its web site specific Internet sites that have potential interest for the Library user. But the Irondale Public Library cannot control a user's access to other Internet resources.

The Irondale Public Library subscribes to a filtering service that has been installed on all its public Internet workstations. However, the filtering service can be turned off at the request of any adult user. The filtering service limits the amount of pornographic or obscene material available to the Internet, but no filtering service is completely effective. The Library does not edit what is made available or filtered out by this service. The Library does not permit the use of chat rooms and other Internet services and products that do not support the Library's mission.

JCLC and its member libraries are required to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act in order to be eligible for federal Universal Service (Erate) discounts and other federal grants [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].

Responsibilities of Library Staff and Users

The Library staff will not monitor a user's Internet use, except for length of use in order to ensure equal opportunity access for everyone. The user, or the parent of a minor, is responsible for his or her session at all times.

The Library reserves the right to terminate the Internet session that disrupts library services or that involves user behavior that violates the Library's policies. As with all Library resources, the Library affirms the right and responsibility of parents/guardians, not Library staff, to determine and monitor their minor children's (under the age of 17) use of the Internet.

Parents are responsible for their minor children's use of the Library resources and facilities. Parents who believe that their children cannot responsibly use the Library's Internet access are requested to monitor their children's Internet use.

The amount of time the Library staff can devote to providing computer instruction to patrons is limited. Staff may instruct patrons as time permits or by appointment.

Internet Safety

General Warnings; Individual Responsibility of Parents and Users. All users and their parents/guardians (child less than 17 years of age) are advised that access to the electronic network may include materials inappropriate for children. Every user must take responsibility for his or her use of the computer network and Internet and stay away from inappropriate sites. If a patron finds that other users are visiting offensive or harmful sites, he or she should report such use to library staff. Parents or legal guardians are encouraged to give their children internet guidelines.

Personal Safety. In using the computer network and Internet, do not reveal personal information such as your home address or telephone number. Do not use your real name or any other information which might allow a person to locate you without first obtaining the permission of a parent. Do not arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone you meet on the network or Internet without your parent's permission. No one should agree to meet a person you have only communicated with on the Internet in a secluded place or in a private setting. Failure to log out of any personal accounts can allow others to access any personal information entered. As a general practice, patrons should never check the Remember Me box when logging into their accounts on any public PCs.

Hacking and Other Illegal Activities. It is a violation of this Policy to use the Irondale Public Library computer network or the Internet to gain unauthorized access to other computers of computer systems, or to attempt to gain such unauthorized access. Any use which violates state or federal law relating to copyright, trade secrets, the distribution of obscene or pornographic materials, or which violates any other applicable law or municipal ordinance, is strictly prohibited.

CIPA requires the implementation of a ”technology protection measure”- generally referred to as an Internet filter - to block access to visual depictions deemed “obscene,” “child pornography,” or ”harmful to minors.”

Confidentiality of Library Records:

- Code of Alabama 41-8-10. Registration, etc. records of public libraries to be confidential: right of parents to inspect records.
- Code of Alabama 36-12-40. Inspection and Copying of Records
- Personally identifiable information concerning users may not be disclosed or used in any way on the Internet without the permission of a parent or guardian (of minor child), or the permission of the user himself/herself.
- Users should never give out private or confidential information about themselves or others on the Internet, particularly credit card numbers and Social Security numbers. The Library Director may authorize the release of directory information, as defined by the Code of Alabama, for internal administrative or planning purposes.
- Any disclosure of current patron information to legal authorities, as required by law with warrant or subpoena, must be authorized by the Library Director.

Disclaimers

While the Library endeavors to provide access to information of the highest quality, the Library specifically disclaims any warrant as to the information’s accuracy, timeliness, authoritativeness, usefulness or fitness for a particular purpose.

The Library will have no liability or direct, indirect or consequential damages related to the use of information accessed through the Library’s Internet service.

The Library, having installed filtering technology, will have no liability for damages related to the operation of, or failure of, the filter, or for its circumvention by users.

Since software and information downloaded from any sources, including the Internet, may contain computer viruses, users are advised to utilize visual checking software on their home computers. The Library is not responsible for damage to users’ data storage devices or computers or for loss of data, damage or liability that may occur from use of the Library’s computer.

Unacceptable Uses of Computers

Among the uses that are considered unacceptable, and which constitute a violation of this policy are the following.

Uses that violate the law or encourage others to violate the law. Transmitting of offensive or harassing messages; offering for sale or use any substance the possession or

use of which is prohibited by law; viewing, transmitting or downloading pornographic materials or materials that encourage others to violate the law; downloading or transmitting confidential, trade secret information, or copyrighted materials. Even if materials on the network are not marked with the copyright symbol, users should assume that all materials are protected unless there is explicit permission on the materials to use them.

The term "harmful to minors" is defined by Communications Act of 1934 (47 USC Section 254 [h][7], as meaning:

- any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a
- prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
- depicts, describes, or represents, in patently offensive way with
- respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or
- simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal
- or perverted sexual act or, lewd exhibition of the genitals;
- taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value to minors.

Specific to Alabama:

Dissemination or public display of obscene matter is a misdemeanor in Alabama. Code of Alabama 13A-12-200.3

Dissemination or public display of obscene matter containing visual reproduction of person under 17 years of age involved in obscene acts is a Class B felony in Alabama. Code of Alabama 13A-12-200.11

Use of City of Irondale owned computers to transmit or receive any obscene materials as defined in Alabama Criminal Code 13A-12-200.1

Violation of the above State ordinances 13A-12-200.3 and 13A-12-191 and City ordinance 2-0598 may subject you to loss of library privileges or criminal prosecution.

Copies obtained from the Internet may be subject to copyright law. Violation of the law may subject you to an action for damages and/or an injunction.
Uses that cause harm to others or damage to their property. Engaging in defamation (harming another's reputation by lies); uploading a worm, virus, "Trojan horse," "time bomb" or other harmful form of programming or vandalism; participating in "hacking" activities or any form of unauthorized access to other computers, networks, or information systems.

Uses that jeopardize the security of the computer network or other networks on the Internet. Disclosing or sharing the user's library card number and PIN with others;

impersonating another user; using one's own software programs on the Library's computers; altering the Library's computer settings; damaging or modifying computer equipment or software.

If a patron chooses to use their own device, it must be connected via the library's public wireless network. Patrons should never connect their personal device to the JCLC network utilizing a network or Internet without a parent's permission.

Uses that compromise the safety and security of minors when using e-mail and other forms of direct electronic communications: Child less than 16 years old of age: Giving others private information about one's self or others, including credit card numbers and social security numbers; arranging a face-to-face meeting with someone met on the computer network or Internet without a parent's permission.

Technology Protection Measures

The Library, in combination with its Internet access provider, will install filtering technologies on all public access library computers with Internet access, and will enforce the operation of the filters during any use of the computers, to prevent minors from accessing visual depictions that may be (1) obscene, (2) child pornography, or (3) harmful to minors.

Filtering technologies are not foolproof. It diminishes the likelihood that searchers will inadvertently retrieve text or images that they may find offensive, but does not eliminate that possibility. Filters often block access to sites that users would consider both inoffensive and useful.

If you do not find what you need, please ask a library staff member for help. The filter may be disabled by a staff member, as necessary, for bona fide research or other lawful purposes by people aged 17 and older.

Responses to Violations

The user's access to the Library's computer network and Internet is a privilege, not a right. A user violates this policy by his or her own action. Further, a user should not permit another user to use his or her library card or PIN to access the computer network and Internet. Failure to comply with this policy and its procedures will result in the forfeiture of the user's right to access these computers.

Adoption

Irondale Public Library's first Internet Safety Policy was originally adopted by the Board of Trustees of Irondale Public Library at a public meeting, following normal public notice, on 26 June, 2002.

CIPA Definitions of Terms

- **MINOR:** The term "minor" (for CIPA purposes) means any individual who has not attained the age of 17 years.
- **TECHNOLOGY PROTECTION MEASURE.** This term "technology protection measure" means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are:
- **OBSCENE**, as that term is defined in section 2256 of title 18, United States Code
- **HARMFUL TO MINORS.** The term "harmful to minors" means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that:
    - Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex or excretion;
    - Depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, 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
    - Taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

SEXUAL ACT; SEXUAL CONTACT. The terms "sexual act" and "sexual contact" have the meanings given such terms in section 2246 of title 18, United States Code.

(Revised and Adopted by the Irondale Public Board of Trustees on 16 November 2011.)

(Revised and Adopted again by the Irondale Public Library Board of Trustees on February 28, 2018.)