FALL RIVER PUBLIC LIBRARY
INTERNET PUBLIC ACCESS AND USE POLICY

PLEASE NOTE:
IN ORDER TO PROCEED WITH YOUR SESSION
YOU MUST CLICK ON THE "ACCEPT" BUTTON

Title   **INTERNET PUBLIC ACCESS AND USE**

It is the policy of the Fall River Public Library to secure for the community access to cultural, intellectual, and recreational materials and information on as broad a range of subjects, for as broad a range of interests, and from as broad a range of viewpoints, as possible. The Internet, otherwise known as the World Wide Web, is the primary means of delivering such materials and information in electronic format. The Internet both greatly expands the kinds and amounts of materials and information traditionally provided by libraries, and also makes them far more accessible to the people traditionally served by libraries. In one sense, the Internet makes the library's goal of maximum intellectual and cultural diversity and inclusiveness more readily attainable. By the Internet's very nature, the public gains access to a wealth of materials and information that the library could not otherwise afford to make available. Therefore, it is the policy of the Fall River Public Library, within the limitations imposed by budgetary circumstances, to make the community's access to the Internet as full and free as possible, and at the same time to make the library's assistance to the community in the use of the Internet as full and effective as possible.

In no case does the display of material on the library's public Internet workstations constitute endorsement by the library of the material's content and point of view. Nor is the library responsible for the accuracy or comprehensiveness of material displayed on its Internet workstations. As with all other library material, patrons need to be good information consumers, assessing the validity of the information they find.

In the same way, the existence of a link between the library's website and any other website does not constitute an endorsement of the other website's content and point of view, any more than does the library's selection of a book for inclusion in its collection constitute such an endorsement. In both cases, the library is merely warranting that the linked website or purchased book has been subjected to some form of peer review or other evaluation and has been found to be credible, informative, provocative, stimulating, entertaining, or otherwise capable of eliciting interest or being of use and value. The library does *not* warrant that its website, the server that makes it available, or any links from its site to other web sites are free of viruses or other harmful components.

The Fall River Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association (ALA), and the ALA's "Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of

Rights." In consequence of this endorsement, the library does not control or limit access to material on the Internet, or monitor an individual's use of the Internet. Filtering software is not installed on any of its public Internet computers. Patrons should not be surprised if they encounter material which they personally find inappropriate or offensive. The library assumes no responsibility and shall have no liability for any direct, indirect or consequential damages arising from the use of information found on the Internet, or any communications sent through the library's Internet terminals.

Scope

This policy applies to all use of Internet workstations located at any of the facilities of the Fall River Public Library, and to all home use of the library's web site, fallriverlibrary.org, and any databases or online resources provided from there.

Definitions

The term "Internet" refers to a worldwide computer network, comprised of distinct national, regional and local computer networks each with its own governance and operational priorities, that is capable of the rapid transmission of data (text, images, sounds) to any of its component parts.

Scope of Access

Patrons may use the library's public Internet workstations to gain access to the World Wide Web and also to any specialized databases to which the library may subscribe, either directly or by virtue of its affiliations with Southeastern Automated Integrated Library Systems, Inc. (SAILS), Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC), and the Massachusetts Library System (MLS). The library does not provide e-mail accounts to patrons; however, patrons with existing e-mail accounts may access their accounts through the library's Internet terminals. The library assumes no responsibility and shall have no liability for any claims or damages that result from the provision of such access to users.

Confidentiality

The sources of information to which a patron gains access on the library's public Internet workstations cannot be kept strictly confidential. Subsequent users of these workstations may be able to see which sites previous users have "visited" in search of information. Patrons therefore make use of the library's public Internet workstations at their own risk.

The Fall River Public Library cannot be held responsible for any loss of privacy, fees incurred, and/or personal harm caused to patrons due to the transmission of personal information over the Internet from the library's public Internet workstations. Patrons are warned to exercise extreme caution with respect to online use of their names, telephone numbers, Social Security numbers, addresses, credit card numbers, or any other personal information, and especially with respect to online arrangements of meetings with strangers.

On the other hand, as stated in the policy on Confidentiality of Patron Records, "records relating to patrons' registration for use of the Internet on workstations located at the Fall River Public Library are retained only so long as needed for statistical purposes. Records of the content of patron Internet use are not retained."

Children's Use of the Internet

As stated, the library endorses the ALA's "Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights." This document includes the following: "Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation for self-government. Freedom of expression encompasses the freedom of speech and the corollary right to receive information. These rights extend to minors as well as adults. . . . Parents and legal guardians who are concerned about their children's use of electronic resources should provide guidance to their own children." The library stands prepared to assist parents in providing such guidance—for example, by directing parents to books or web sites that promote online safety for children.

Level of Assistance

As with all other forms of library service to the public, staff members are available to provide assistance in the use of the Library's public Internet work stations. And also as with all other forms of library service to the public, the amount and type of assistance that can be provided is determined by time and staff resources that are available. Library staff can provide general assistance with finding sites, printing, downloading forms, and other basic tasks, but cannot perform tasks for library users (for example, applying for jobs, doing online tests or homework, selling or purchasing items online, or sending email).

Acceptable Use

As with all other library resources and services, patrons are expected to use the public Internet workstations in a responsible manner, respecting the rights of others. Examples of unacceptable uses of the public Internet workstations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- violation of Federal, state, or local laws, including, but not limited to, those regarding copyright and child pornography

- violation of software license agreements

- violation of computer system security

- destruction of or damage to equipment, software, or data belonging to the library or other users

- disruption or unauthorized monitoring of electronic communications

- unauthorized use of computer accounts, access codes, or network identification numbers assigned to others, or any other violation of the privacy of any other user

- harassment, libel, or slander of other users

- any other violation of the policies or regulations of the Fall River Public Library

Unacceptable use of the public Internet workstations at any facility of the Fall River Public Library may result, for periods of time to be determined by the library, in loss of access to the public Internet workstations or loss of all library privileges.

Workstation Equity

At times, the number of patrons wishing to use the Internet exceeds the number of available workstations. Access to workstations is governed by the following guidelines:

- whenever a patron wishes to use the Internet at the Fall River Public Library, he or she must register to use an available public Internet workstation; a workstation may be available immediately, or the patron may be permitted to make a reservation to use a workstation at some future time; use of a public Internet workstation without such registration is prohibited in any and all circumstances.

- the library reserves the right to specify time limits on patron sessions at public Internet workstations.

- the library reserves the right to specify that certain workstations are restricted to certain kinds of activity; such specified activities may include, but are not necessarily limited to, research or homework-related activities, downloading electronic books or music, word processing, or searching for materials available in the collections of the Fall River Public Library or other libraries; different session time limits (or no time limits at all) may be specified for such workstations devoted to particular kinds of activities.

- time limits may be extended when demand is light.

- when, due to heavier demand, time limits must be enforced, a patron must relinquish the workstation he or she has been using upon notification that his or her session time has elapsed; failure to do so may result, as stated in the paragraph on Acceptable Use, "in loss of access to the public Internet workstations or loss of all library privileges."

- attempts by patrons, in any way, shape, or form, to intimidate or otherwise discourage other patrons from using the public Internet workstations may also result "in loss of access to the public Internet workstations or loss of all library privileges."

- only one individual per session may use a workstation; exceptions to this rule may be made for a child or disabled person accompanied by a parent or caregiver or for students or researchers working together on a project, so long as this does not create a disturbance or interfere with computer use by any other patrons.

- printing is available at the public Internet workstations, for a fee to be determined by the library; notice of the fee that is in effect at any particular time will always be given. Patrons are responsible for all pages printed and should ask for help if they are not certain how many pages will print.

- at their own risk, patrons using public Internet workstations may download files and

save or send them to their own devices; neither the Fall River Public Library nor any of its vendors shall be held responsible for any loss of data, damage or liability that may result from such downloading, or that may result from any other use of any of the library's public Internet workstations.

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