

## **INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY** **Screven-Jenkins Regional Library System**

### **Purpose**

The Library System provides access to the Internet as a means of fulfilling its mission to “collect, organize and make accessible informational, educational, recreational and cultural resources” to meet the changing needs of its patrons of all ages and cultural and economic backgrounds. The Board of Trustees supports the idea that all members of the community have free and equal access to the entire range of library resources, regardless of content, approach, format or amount of detail. These rights extend to all users of the public library, including minors. The Board of Trustees is committed to making information available to its patrons in a variety of formats - from traditional print and audiovisual materials to the latest in electronically accessed materials. The computers offered by the Library System are intended to integrate electronic resources from information networks around the world with the Library System’s other resources and, by doing so, enable the Library System to provide information beyond the boundaries of its own collection.

### **Responsibility of Library**

At present, however, the Internet is an unregulated and rapidly changing medium. It contains a wealth of diverse material that is personally, professionally and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages, but it also contains materials that may be offensive, controversial, disturbing, illegal, harmful to minors, inaccurate or incomplete. Congress recently enacted The Children’s Internet Protection Act, which went into effect on April 20, 2001. This law mandates Internet filtering for public libraries in an attempt to protect minors from illegal (obscenity and child pornography) as well as material considered “harmful to minors” as defined by Georgia Law. The Screven County Library, in compliance with this new legislation, has installed filtering software on all public computers in the library. However, parents should recognize that filtering software does not filter out inappropriate images, only text. Filtering software also blocks some websites that do not contain objectionable material and fails to block some websites that do contain objectionable material. In other words, it only provides a limited measure of protection from inappropriate Internet content and you should continue to carefully monitor your child’s access.

The Library system has no control over information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. Provision of Internet access by a Library System does not constitute an endorsement of any particular information contained on the Internet. The Library System, moreover, shall have no liability for direct, indirect or consequential damages related to the use of information accessed on the Internet from Library equipment. Library patrons use the Internet at their own risk. Users, therefore, are encouraged to evaluate the validity of information obtained from the Internet.

### **Responsibility of Patrons and Parents of Minors**

Individuals must accept responsibility for determining what is or is not appropriate. The Library System upholds and affirms the right of each individual to have access to constitutionally protected materials and also affirms the right and responsibility of parents to determine and monitor their children's use of library materials and resources.

Parents are expected to monitor and supervise their children's use of the Internet in selecting material that is consistent with personal and family values and that is appropriate for the age and understanding of their children. Parents and Guardians are encouraged to work closely with their children in the library and particularly on the Internet. Although the Library System offers filtered access to the Internet for minors, it does not and cannot provide monitoring or supervision of children. Parents are encouraged to read "Librarian's Guide to Cyberspace for Parents & Kids," copies of which are available free from any library location or on the World Wide Web at [www.ala.org/parentspage/greatsites/guide.html](http://www.ala.org/parentspage/greatsites/guide.html). Minors who visit the library without a parent or guardian are responsible for their own decisions and behavior and may be denied access to the Internet.

In order to register to use library Internet computers, patrons must have an active, current Regional Library System card in good standing and a completed Internet Registration form. Patrons under the age of 18 years must have a parent or legal guardian read and sign the Internet Registration form before they will be permitted to access the Internet. The parent or guardian must also verify the minor's age. Library staff is available to provide assistance and to help identify age appropriate websites for children accessing the Internet.

Library visitors without a valid system card must obtain access from library

staff to use the library Internet computers. Library visitors must present a photographic identification card (or other approved means of age verification, such as a valid driver's license, state identification card, military identification card, or birth certificate) and must complete an Internet Registration form to use the library Internet computers.

Internet computers shall not be used for illegal activity, to access illegal materials, or to access materials which by local community standards would be obscene. 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.

### **Exercise Caution During Internet Use**

Internet users are reminded that:

1. Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete or current information.
2. Public library computer terminals are neither private nor secure.
3. Users are financially responsible for any charges that they may incur from their use of the Internet.
4. Users should exercise extreme caution about revealing any personal identification information (e.g., name, address, telephone number, email address, social security number, age, or credit card number) over the Internet. Minors should **NEVER** disclose any personal identification information over the Internet.
5. If you receive an email message from a person unknown to you or from an unfamiliar email address, the best and safest policy is to delete it before opening or reading it.

### **Rules of Conduct for Use of Library Computers**

1. Internet computers shall not be used for illegal activity, to access illegal materials, to access child pornography, or to access materials which by local community standards would be obscene.
2. Transmitting and/or receiving obscene materials and/or child pornography is a violation of law and is not permitted under any circumstances. Violation of this rule will subject a patron to criminal prosecution and result in immediate and permanent loss of library Internet access privileges.

3. 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, or materials “harmful to minors” as currently defined by law (see Definitions in #19, below.) Violations of this rule may subject a patron to criminal prosecution and will result in immediate loss of library Internet access privileges.
4. Installation, downloading, or modification of software is prohibited. Under no circumstances may patrons use their personal software on library computers. No files may be downloaded to the library computers’ hard drives. Disks may be purchased at the circulation desk for \$1.00 if you would like to save files. We strongly advise the use of virus detection software before using files downloaded from the Internet. The library assumes no responsibility for damages to a user’s computer, disks, or files.
5. Users shall respect copyright laws and licensing agreements.
6. Users shall not make any attempt to gain unauthorized access to restricted computer files or networks, or to damage or modify computer equipment or software.
7. Modification or circumvention of filtering software is prohibited. Violations of this rule may result in loss of library Internet access privileges.
8. Prompt payment is required by users who incur charges for printing or other authorized fees. Printing costs are 20¢ per page. Ask at the circulation desk for your printout.
9. Users shall sign up in person to use the Internet on a “next available terminal” basis. Terminals may not be “reserved” for other persons and will not be held for persons who are not in the immediate vicinity when their name is called. Telephone reservations will not be taken. Latecomers forfeit their time if more than 5 minutes late.
10. Internet access sessions shall be limited to 60 minutes, unless no one is waiting for that terminal.
11. Users must end their session and leave the terminal when asked to do so by authorized Library staff.
12. Upon completion of an Internet access session, depending upon current demand for terminals, a user may be required to wait 60

- minutes before signing up for another session or may be limited to a certain number of time slots per day.
13. The number of Internet access sessions available per day, per user, may be established by the Librarian in charge. Such limitations will be dependent on facility-specific demand in order to provide access for the majority of users.
  14. Users shall respect the privacy of other users and shall refrain from attempting to view or read material being used by others, as well as to censor or comment on what others are viewing.
  15. The library's computers are set up for optimal usage by a single individual. With the exception of a minor, who is accompanied by a parent or guardian during Internet access, only one user per computer terminal is permitted.
  16. Computers may be used only for educational, informational and recreational purposes.
  17. Misuse of library computers will result in the loss of computer privileges, potential loss of library privileges and possible prosecution. Such misuse includes, but is not limited to, using the computer for illegal activities, hacking into the library computer system or any other computer system, damaging or attempting to damage computer equipment or software, interfering with systems operations, integrity or security, gaining unauthorized access to another person's files, sending harassing messages, altering or attempting to alter the library's computer settings, and violating copyright laws and software licensing agreements.
  18. Violations of these Rules may result in the loss of computer privileges. A patron will receive a warning for a first offense; a second offense will result in a temporary loss of Internet access privileges for a period of two weeks; a third offense will result in a permanent loss of Internet access privileges.
  19. Definitions:
    1. "Minor" is a person under 18 years of age. O.C.G.A. §16-12-102(3).
    2. "Harmful to minors" is defined as per current Georgia law, O.C.G.A. §16-12-102.
    3. "Inappropriate matter" for minors is material that is obscene as

defined under Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §16-12-80), child pornography as defined under federal and/or state law (18 U.S.C. §2256; O.C.G.A. §16-12-100), and material that is “harmful to minors” as defined in Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §16-12-102).

4. Illegal materials for adults is child pornography and obscenity as defined under federal and/or state law (18 U.S.C. §2256; O.C.G.A. §16-12-100; O.C.G.A §16-12-80).

### **Termination or Prohibition of Access**

Library employees are authorized to terminate any user’s access session, or to prohibit a user from subsequent access sessions for up to two weeks from the date of informing the user of that action, given cause to believe that the user has failed to comply with the Internet Acceptable Use Policy and/or Rules.

### **Right of Appeal**

An Internet user whose access session has been terminated or whose Internet access has been prohibited shall have the right to appeal and/or request that Internet access privileges be reinstated. An appeal must be in writing and submitted to the Library Director within five days of the termination or prohibition. Within ten days of receipt of the appeal, the Library Director shall review the matter and notify the patron in writing of his/her decision. If the Library Director’s decision is adverse to the patron, the patron may appeal in writing within five days to the Library’s Board of Trustees, which shall thereafter consider the matter and issue its decision in writing within 30 days of receipt. No further appeals shall be considered. Temporary or permanent denial of Internet privileges at any Library System facility will be effective at all Library System facilities.

Amended January 25, 2007

Amended October 24, 2002

Approved July, 26 2001

By the Screven-Jenkins Regional Library System Board of Trustees

### REGISTRATION FOR INTERNET USE

I agree that I will use the Internet for educational, informational and recreational purposes only. I have read, I understand, and I will abide by the **INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**. I understand that any violation of law while using the computers may subject me to criminal prosecution. I further understand that if I violate any rule, my Internet access privileges may be revoked and/or appropriate legal action taken.

Status:

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Signature of User

Date

If user is under the age of 18 years, the parent or legal guardian must be present and must read and sign this Agreement.

As the parent or legal guardian of the above minor child, I have read the **INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**. I understand that this access is for educational, informational and recreational purposes only. I recognize and agree that it is impossible for the Regional Library System to restrict access to controversial and/or inappropriate materials on the Internet and I agree that they are not responsible in any way for any such materials acquired or viewed by my child. I hereby accept full responsibility for supervising my child(ren) at all times during his/her/their use of the Internet.

First Name:

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Parent or Legal Guardian

Date

Witnessed by:

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Staff Member

Date

Last Name: