

## **INTERNET USE POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

The mission of the Rockwall County Library is to provide educational, informational, and recreational resources to patrons of all ages, cultural, and economic backgrounds. The Library seeks to protect intellectual freedom, promote literacy, encourage lifelong learning and provide library materials and information services. In introducing the Internet as an information resource, the Library's goal is to enhance its existing collection in size and depth and, as a public access agency, give opportunity to any citizen who wishes to participate in navigating the Internet. Please remember that many times specific information that is needed is often more readily available in the Library's books, magazines, databases or through other library services such as interlibrary loan.

### **RESPONSIBILITY OF USERS**

The freedom to access information is also a responsibility. The Internet enables the Library to provide resources not available within the confines of its own collection. Currently, however, the Internet is an unregulated medium. It offers access to a wealth of material that is personally, professionally, and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages, but it also enables access to some material that may be offensive, disturbing, and/or illegal. Internet resources are not subject to the same selection criteria that the Library uses for other materials. The Library staff cannot control information accessible through the Internet and is not responsible for its content or accuracy. Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete or current information. Users need to be good information consumers and question the validity of the information that is found.

### **CHILDREN'S USE OF THE INTERNET**

All Internet resources accessible through the Library are provided equally to all Library users. Youth under 18 years of age will be required to have parental or guardian permission to access the Internet. While the Library staff encourages parental supervision of any minor accessing the Internet, children under age 11 must have direct parental supervision during Internet sessions. Parents or guardians are responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their children. Parents are encouraged to work closely with their children in selecting material that is consistent with personal family values. The staff of the Rockwall County Library will not be responsible for what minors access on the Internet.

## GUIDELINES FOR ACCESSING THE INTERNET

1. A current Rockwall County Library card *in good standing* is required. Anyone wishing to access the Internet must use only his/her own library card number in accessing the Internet.

Exceptions are individuals who live outside Rockwall County and its surrounding counties, who may obtain a limited use guest pass using a driver's license or other photo identification.

2. You must read this policy and agree to abide by it before using the Library computers.

3. If you are under 18, you and a parent or guardian must read this policy and sign the Internet Agreement Form.

4. Patrons who are accompanied by children under age 6 must keep those children with them while using Internet computers.

5. You will be limited to 30 minutes at a time if others are waiting. Use may not exceed 180 minutes per day.

6. In general, only one person may use a computer at a time, except for children under age 11, who may sit with a parent while using the parent's account for internet access.

7. The Internet computers shall not be used to access sexually explicit, obscene or prurient material.

8. The Internet computers shall not be used with the intent to intimidate, harass, or display hostility toward others (e.g. hate literature, pornography, etc.). Users are asked to be sensitive with material that others in a public place might find offensive.

9. Any files saved must be saved to your own portable device, as hard drive changes are deleted frequently from the library computers.

**WARNING:** Files downloaded from the Internet may contain a virus or other malicious software and you need to have security software on your own computer. The Rockwall County Library is not responsible for damage to a patron's computer or other device, or for any loss of data, damage, or liability that may occur from patron use of the Library's computers.

10. Printing is allowed but counts as part of the computer use time limit. Copies are 15 cents per page for black and white copies. Color copies are not available. Patrons are responsible for all pages printed regardless of intent or value to the patron. We ask you to minimize your printing to help us conserve paper and control costs.

11. To ensure the equitable delivery of all library services, Library staff may assist patrons in the initial access to the Internet as time permits and provide basic search suggestions, but cannot offer extensive personal instruction nor conduct research for patrons.

12. In attempting to answer telephone reference questions, the staff of the Rockwall County Library will use all available resources including the Internet. However, any requests for extensive research will have to be done by the patron in the Library. This includes printing or downloading.

13. Internet computers will be turned off 10 minutes prior to closing time. Absolutely no exceptions will be made to this policy.

14. The Library cannot insure the privacy of individuals who use the Internet to conduct business or for personal correspondence.

15. Failure to abide by this policy and guidelines and failure to use the Internet computers appropriately and responsibly may result in revocation of Internet use privileges, Library privileges, and/or criminal prosecutions.

**USERS MAY NOT:**

- a. Make any attempt to alter software configurations or to log on using another person's card number.
- b. Use the computers to gain unauthorized access to the Library's network or computer systems or to any other network or computer system.
- c. Obstruct other people's work by consuming large amounts of system resources or by deliberately crashing any Library computer system.
- d. Make any attempt to damage computer equipment or software.
- e. Make any attempt to cause degradation of system performance.
- f. Engage in any activity that is disruptive to other Library users.
- g. Violate Federal, State, or Local laws or regulations or software licensing agreements.

Approved by Rockwall County Library Board March 2012

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