



# Onondaga County Public Library Board Policy

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## Internet Safety and Acceptable Use Policy

1<sup>st</sup> Consideration: 11/20/2024  
2<sup>nd</sup> Consideration: 12/18/2024  
Resolution #: 24-44  
Date Approved: 12/18/2024  
Review Date: December 2027

The Library (hereinafter “OCPL” or “Library”) provides access to the Internet as an electronic conduit of ideas and information, greatly expanding its knowledge resources and services. This access is available to all users who recognize and accept the scope of this policy. The Library does not control the information accessed through the Internet and is not responsible for its content.

OCPL is aware that a public library is a public space; all users are expected to respect the space as a collective information commons and adhere to [OCPL Patron Code of Conduct](#).

### Children and the Internet

The Library seeks to provide equal access to information for persons of all ages, preserving the status of those under the age of 18 as full members of the Internet community. In the case of any individual who has not attained the age of 18 years, responsibility rests with parents or responsible adult. Parents or responsible adult are responsible for the supervision of child’s Internet activity.

The Library has taken measures designed to assist in the safe and effective use of the Internet, including:

- Employing technology protection measures (content filters) on all computers offering internet access, in accordance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act.
- Parents or responsible adult and children are strongly encouraged to visit [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org) for some helpful safety tools and tips.

To address the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, social media and other forms of direct electronic communications, the Library recommends the following safety guidelines. Those individuals under 18 should:

- a. Always ask their parents’ permission before giving out personal information such as their name, email address, home address, school name or phone number anywhere on the Internet;
- b. Always tell their parents or another adult they trust if they see something online that is frightening or that they do not understand;
- c. Never respond to messages that make them feel uncomfortable;
- d. Never give out a credit card number or password online without parental approval, and
- e. Never arrange to meet in person someone they have met online unless they discuss it with their parents and an adult accompanies them.

## **Rules Governing Use**

It will be considered a violation of this Policy for a Library patron to engage in the following conduct:

- a. Abusive or harassing conduct.
- b. Any criminal or otherwise illegal conduct, including the public display of offensive sexual materials as restricted by NYS Penal Laws, §245.10, §245.11, §263.11 and §263.16 when using a public PC. The library reserves the right to limit access to pertinent web resources to maintain compliance with this legislation.
- c. Any copyright infringement. Users are required to comply with all licensing and copyright regulation that may apply to systems, software or materials accessed.
- d. Damaging, disabling or otherwise interfering with the operation of computers, computer systems (including, but not limited to, altering the existing computer settings or filenames), software or related equipment through physical action or by electronic means.
- e. Downloading, installing or using software not expressly authorized by OCPL.

## **Public Users' Security**

Users should be aware that the Internet is not a secure medium and that parties other than the user and the library may be able to obtain information regarding users' activities. However, OCPL will not release information on the use of specific Internet resources by members of the public except as required by law, pursuant to a subpoena or as necessary for the proper operation of the Library.

## **Wireless Access (Wi-Fi)**

Wireless Internet access (Wi-Fi) is available in all library buildings for library patrons to use with their own personal notebooks, laptops and other mobile devices. Wireless users agree to abide by the library's Internet Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.

## **Disclaimers and Liability**

The library strives to provide a safe and secure internet environment for all users. However, users must be aware of the following disclaimers and limitations of liability:

- **Content Filtering:** The library employs content filters to block access to known malicious websites and certain categories of inappropriate content. While these filters are intended to enhance user safety, they are not 100% effective. The library cannot guarantee that all harmful or objectionable content will be blocked. Additionally, some legitimate content may inadvertently be restricted. Users who believe necessary content has been blocked may request assistance from library staff.
- **No Guarantee of Internet Safety:** Users access the internet at their own risk. The library is not responsible for any damages that may result from using its internet services, including, but not limited to:
  - Exposure to malicious software (viruses, malware, etc.).
  - Compromised personal data or identity theft.
  - Inaccurate, offensive, or illegal content accessed online.
- **Responsibility for Personal Information:** Users are responsible for the security of their personal information while using library computers or Wi-Fi. The library strongly advises against entering sensitive personal data (e.g., social security numbers, banking information) on public computers.
- **Third-Party Websites:** The library is not responsible for the content or privacy practices of third-party websites (websites other than the library's) accessed via its internet services. Users should

exercise caution when entering personal information on external sites and be aware of each site's privacy policies.

- **No Liability for User Actions:** The library is not liable for any illegal, inappropriate, or harmful actions taken by users while accessing the internet. Users are responsible for complying with all applicable laws and the library's acceptable use policy.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

The library respects the privacy of all users and is committed to ensuring confidentiality regarding their use of the internet and library computers. The following principles guide our practices:

- **No Monitoring of Internet Activity:** The library does not monitor or track individual internet activities. We respect the privacy of users and do not retain data or browsing history after each computer session. Once a session ends, all personal information entered during that session is erased.
- **No Retention of Personal Data:** The library's computers are configured to delete all personal information, search history, and any data entered by users when the session ends. Users are encouraged to log out of any accounts and ensure all their personal files are saved to external storage before ending their session, as these cannot be recovered.
- **Collection of Usage Statistics:** To comply with state reporting requirements, the library collects anonymous, aggregate data on overall computer usage, such as the number of users and duration of sessions. This data is not linked to any specific individuals and is used solely for reporting and planning purposes.
- **User Responsibility:** While the library takes measures to ensure a secure environment, users are responsible for their own privacy and for safeguarding personal information. The library recommends avoiding entering sensitive information (e.g., banking details) on public computers and using secure websites whenever possible.

## **Compliance**

The OCPL Administration is authorized to develop rules for appropriate use of the Internet at the Onondaga County Public Library. Regardless of whether a rule is specifically listed herein or in the Administration's rules, if the user's conduct while using the system disrupts the Library or its computer network, it will be considered a violation of this Policy and appropriate action will be taken against the violator, set forth in other Board Policy governing patron behavior. Federal, state and/or local law enforcement agencies may also be contacted where the violation involves criminal activity.