

## Public-Access Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy

SCL Effective Date: 7/21/2021

Somerset County Library (SCL) is committed to the promotion of lifelong learning. As part of that commitment, the Library will provide free public access to the diverse and unique resources available on the Internet as well as free access to premium content licensed for use by Somerset County Library patrons.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Information available through the Internet may be protected by copyrights or trademarks. Transmission of copyrighted or pornographic material in violation of any federal or state regulation is prohibited.
2. Patrons should be aware that the Internet contains offensive material. Although library-owned computers and devices utilize filtering technology, SCL does not warrant the effectiveness of Internet filtering.
3. The Internet is a vast worldwide community with no limitations or restrictions. Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete, or current information. SCL is not responsible for any information obtained on the Internet. Use is at the patron's own risk.
4. Since the library is a public forum, privacy while using the Internet cannot be provided. Users are also cautioned that all transactions and communication in an electronic environment are vulnerable to unauthorized access.
5. Revealing personal information in open forums such as chat rooms and e-mail can be dangerous. Use extreme caution with regard to revealing information about yourself or others in these open forums.
6. Parents and guardians may restrict their children under age 18 from access to Internet resources available through the library. Parents or guardians, not the library or its staff, are responsible for the Internet information selected and accessed by their children.
7. SCL provides wireless Internet access on a limited support basis and does not guarantee functional uptime. Please alert library staff to any service outages so that the issues may be resolved in a timely manner.

### PATRON RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Users—or the persons signing for users—of the library's technology and Internet access must read and acknowledge the Library's **Public-Access Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy**. Users under the age of 18 must have parent/guardian approval to use the Internet.
2. Sign-up to use the in-library public access computers at the Service Desk. The library reserves the right to assign computers and impose time limits.

3. It is a felony offense in the state of Pennsylvania "to display or cause to display any explicit sexual material on any viewing screen in such manner that the display is visible in any establishment where minors, as part of the general public, may be exposed to view all or any part of such materials." Title 18 Penna. Crime Code - Sect. 5903) Therefore, viewing of such material in the Library will not be permitted. Violation of this provision may result in the immediate termination of Internet privileges.
4. To comply with federal regulations, all internet traffic is filtered. Adults may request at the service desk to use a computer without filtering "to enable access for bona fide research or other lawful purposes."
5. Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data is prohibited. This includes the uploading or creating of computer viruses. Hardware and software may not be modified or destroyed.
6. Installing personal or downloaded programs is prohibited.
7. Saving files to the hard drive permanently is not possible, and any files left behind will be automatically erased upon logout. Saving to or accessing files from removable media or personal devices is permitted and encouraged. Users may use USB flash drives at their own risk. The library cannot offer technical support when problems occur with such devices. USB drives may be available for purchase at the Service Desk.
8. Users are welcome to bring their own devices for use with the library's WiFi Internet connection. Users may not plug equipment into the Library's computer network. Use of electrical receptacles and portable power is permitted.
9. Users are responsible for knowing how to configure their own equipment. Library staff may provide general information about configuration options. However, SCL will not support configurations and cannot be responsible for any changes made to an individual's computer or device settings.
10. Users must not use the network in a disruptive manner or in a way that disturbs other library patrons. This might include streaming audio without proper ear phones to eliminate noise or engaging in the excessive downloading or uploading of material. Ear phones may be available upon request for loan or purchase at the Service Desk.
11. SCL is a public library and not a venue for business activity. Therefore, patrons may not use the Internet connection at the library for any exclusively commercial or for-profit purposes.

## **LIMITATIONS**

1. Personal e-mail accounts are available through websites such as Google, Yahoo, etc. and are not provided by SCL.
2. Library staff are available for a limited amount of assistance in using the Internet, but they generally cannot spend large amounts of time guiding patrons through the Internet. Staff cannot provide in-depth training concerning Internet computer jargon or personal computer use on a non-scheduled basis, but may be able to offer searching suggestions. In partnership with

Pennsylvania CareerLink of Somerset County, SCL staff at the main library location offer Digital Literacy Workshops on a monthly schedule. Special workshops may also be offered throughout the year as part of the Tuesday night Personal Enrichment Series. Those who need additional assistance may ask library staff about the possibility of making an Appointment with a Librarian or getting a referral to other training sources.

3. If more than one person is using a library-owned computer or hotspot at one time, the patron who signed out the computer or hotspot is responsible for operating it.
4. As per federal regulations, filtering is enabled on library-owned computers and devices, and sites that are security threats, pornographic, or may be otherwise harmful to children are blocked by 3rd party software.
5. Use of the Internet at the Library is a privilege, not a right. Any violation of the Library's Internet policy may result in loss of library privileges and appropriate legal action may be taken.
6. Due to the ever-changing nature of these services, this policy is subject to change without notice at the Library's discretion.
7. Additional requirements and restrictions may apply to technology, devices and Internet services provided through grant-funded programs. Any additional Rules or Acceptable Use Policy Statements will be provided by SCL staff under the direction of the SCL Director as needed in order to comply with requirement of specific grants or programs.