

Computer and Internet Policy

Introduction

Messenger Public Library of North Aurora (MPL) serves as a gateway to an expanding world by providing materials and services to community residents to inform, connect, and enrich the community of North Aurora. The internet is used for a variety of purposes and MPL supports those functions that relate to its mission and services. This policy also applies to the use of library-owned equipment and patrons' personal electronic devices to access the internet via the library's public Wi-Fi or circulating hotspots.

Patrons may sign into computers with their library card or obtain a guest pass at the help desk. MPL uses a PC reservation system software to monitor computer time and provide printing capabilities. No liability is assumed for any loss, damage, privacy issues, or accounts. The library cannot guarantee that internet access or computers will always function error free.

- Computers in the Youth Services Department are to be used by those under 18 years of age or by adults supervising children in the Youth Services Department.
- Computers in the Adult Services Department are to be used by those 12 years of age and older.

With the exception of the library's website, all of the information found online has been generated outside the library. The internet is not governed, restricted, or regulated and provides a wide variety of information; library staff do not control or monitor material accessed on the internet. MPL is not responsible for the accuracy and/or authenticity of information discovered through the internet. The library encourages internet users to be informed consumers and to evaluate information retrieved from all online sources.

In alignment with the principle of supporting intellectual freedom, MPL does not use internet filters on library computers. The library's policy in this regard reflects the values articulated in the following statements by the American Library Association:

- Library Bill of Rights
- Access to Digital Information, Services and Networks
- Freedom To Read Statement

A. User Responsibility

Access to the networks and the information technology environment at the Messenger Public Library is a privilege. All users must respect the rights of other users, the library's equipment, and all applicable license and contractual agreements related to paid resources. In consideration of this responsibility, patrons must adhere to the following:

- Sign up for only one public computer at a time.
- Two users, by mutual agreement, may share one terminal if their behavior and conversation does not disturb other users.

- Report any loss or theft of their library card immediately.
- Observe the legal protections provided by copyright, license, and computer abuse laws.
- Observe posted time limits and regulations.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality to the fullest extent possible, given certain constraints such as proximity to other patrons and staff. Users are discouraged from providing personal or financial information over the internet in public spaces.
- Refrain from using sounds and visuals which might disrupt the ability of other library patrons to use the library and its resources. Headphones are required and can be obtained at the User Services Desk.
- Be knowledgeable in basic computer use. While the library may occasionally present computer classes or other instructional programming, in-depth computer assistance is available by appointment only.
- Access content that is appropriate for public viewing, with respect for the public space and other users.
- Parents or guardians are solely responsible for monitoring, guiding, or restricting their children's use of computer and internet resources. The library does not restrict access to information based upon age and does not function in lieu of a parent.
- Beverages must be in closed containers to prevent damage to library furnishings and resources. Food must be consumed inside the lobby area.

B. Violations of Use

Resources should only be used for acceptable public purposes. The library reserves the right to suspend the use of resources by anyone who uses library computing equipment, electronic devices, or a network for an illegal purpose or for a purpose in violation of the standards outlined in this and other Messenger Public Library policies.

All patrons shall specifically refrain from the following activities:

- Using sounds and visuals that may disrupt the ability of other library patrons to use the library and its resources.
- Sharing computer account numbers, passwords, and other types of authorization that are assigned to individual users without consent.
- Downloading and/or installing executable files from any source, intentional propagation of computer viruses, or violation of software or copyright licensing and laws.
- Changing the configuration files of any hardware or software on the library's workstations or attempting to disable the library's security software.
- Misrepresenting themselves with the intention of committing harm, fraud, or as a source of electronic communication.
- Connecting any personal devices to the library's wired "Ethernet" network.
- Threats of violence or endangerment of others, obscenity, pornography of any nature, gambling, illegal activities, harassing communications, or any other act that may violate the Patron Code of Conduct. Deliberately accessing obscene materials, images or websites that would not be suitable for public consumption in a public setting.

C. Limitations of Use

- The library may place limitations on the time and manner of computer use in order to allocate computer and internet access as equitably as possible.
- Computers are shut down 10 minutes before close of business to allow, patrons should leave the facility in a timely fashion.
- The PC reservation software allows each valid SWAN (System Wide Automated Network) card holder or reciprocal borrower two hours of computer use each day, with two 30-minute extensions if computer availability allows. Visitors may request one guest pass per day.
- The software keeps track of the minutes you use on any of the library's computers at any library location. You may divide your allotted time among different computer stations throughout the day.

D. Disclaimer/ Liability

- The computers are equipped with anti-virus software. However, the library does not assume responsibility for any virus that may be acquired during use.
- The library cannot guarantee privacy or confidentiality of information transmitted over the Internet.
- As with other library materials, restriction of a child's access to the internet is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian. Parents or guardians are solely responsible for monitoring, guiding, or restricting their children's use of computer and internet resources.
- The library assumes no responsibility for damage, theft, or loss of any kind to a user's personal equipment, software, or data files.

This policy is not exhaustive. Infractions may result in suspended or revoked computer privileges, or legal action if determined to be appropriate. The Library Director and designees are authorized to monitor and enforce this policy, and to make determinations as necessary.

Authorized BOT 11/2017

Updated 1/9/25 with substantial enhancements.