VOLUNTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY

INTERNET USE AND SAFETY POLICY

Voluntown Public Library is pleased to offer Internet access to its patrons as part of its mission to provide educational and recreational resources for the community. The website of the Voluntown Public Library may be accessed at [voluntownlibrary.com](http://www.voluntown.gov). The library’s web page is updated periodically and provides links to some reliable sources for reference, research, and recreation.

The Internet is a decentralized, unmoderated global network. The Voluntown Public Library has no control over the content found there. The library is not responsible for the availability and accuracy of information found on the Internet.

The Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) was enacted by Congress to address concerns about children’s access to obscene or harmful content over the Internet. CIPA imposes certain requirements on libraries that receive discounts for Internet access through the E-rate program. Voluntown Public Library participates in this program.

It is the policy of the Voluntown Public Library to uphold the right of individual users to access Constitutionally-protected speech and information in a wide range of formats, including that available over the Internet. However, as required by CIPA, and in order to receive certain federal funds, the Voluntown Public Library will implement technology protection measures for all internet-accessible computers and other electronic devices using the internet device provided by or through the library.

The technology protection measure/filtering software will, to the extent practicable, (a) protect against access by staff and patrons, both minors (under 18 years of age)and adults, to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minor as defined by federal law; (b) promote safety and security of all internet users, including minors, when using electronic mail, chatrooms and other forms of direct electronic communication; (c) guard against unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding all internet users, including minors; and (d) prevent unauthorized online access to the computer networks of the library and others, including so-called “hacking: and any other unlawful activities by all internet users, including minors.

Users should be aware, however, that all currently available technology protection measure/filtering software results in some degree of both “underblocking” (permitting access to certain material that falls within the foregoing categories) and “overblocking” (denying access to certain constitutionally protected material that does not fall within the foregoing categories). The library cannot and does not guarantee that the technology protection measure/filtering software will block all obscenity, child pornography, or materials that are harmful to minors. Nor can the library guarantee that the technology protection measure/filtering software will not restrict access to sites that may have legitimate research or other value.

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In order to help address the problem of over-and under-blocking and to enhance users’ access to constitutionally protected speech and information, users, both adults and minors, may speak to the librarian or contact the library at vpl@voluntown.gov or 860-376-0485.

Library staff will oversee use of the library’s online computer network and access to the internet by all patrons in accordance with this policy. However, the library is not and cannot be responsible for maintaining the privacy or confidentiality of personal or personally identifiable information provided by a user to a third party via the internet.

Any user who is 18 years or older may ask the library staff to disable the technology protection in order to obtain unfiltered internet access for bona fide research or any other lawful purpose.

As with all library materials, patrons need to be good information consumers. A *Library Internet* *Use Form* must be completed by a parent/legal guardian for minor children. Parents or legal guardians, not the library, are responsible for their minor child/children’s use of the Internet as they are also responsible for internet information selected and/or accessed by their child/children’s internet sessions. Parents are strongly advised to supervise their child/children’s internet sessions. Internet computer work stations are for reference, research and recreation.

To help protect and to prevent viruses common to public computers, patrons are limited to library software, and may not load their own software to the library computers. Patrons may download files from the internet to their own device but patrons may not save files to the computer’s hard drive. Data storage devices may be used to save information and are available for purchase at the circulation desk. The library cannot assure that the data or files downloaded by users are virus-free.

Misuse of the computer or internet access will result in the loss of computer privileges and may also result in the loss of library privileges. Illegal acts involving library computing resources may also be subject to prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities. Illegal acts may include, but not limited to:

* Unauthorized or illegal copying of copyright-protected material
* Display of explicit sexual graphic or otherwise offensive material that is inappropriate for minors and open public environment
* Hacking and similar activities
* Violating the computer or network security system
* Unauthorized use of computer accounts, access codes or network identification numbers
* Violating software license agreements
* Harassment or stalking

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The library also offers “Wi-Fi” from which to access the Internet with personal devices. All wireless access users should have up-to-date virus protection on their laptop computers or wireless devices. Security cannot be guaranteed and all transactions, files and communications are vulnerable to unauthorized access and use and, therefore, should be considered public. E-mail services may be accessed via the wireless connection. Printing via the wireless connection is available.

Library staff will provide general information on the settings necessary to access the Internet via these connections but are not responsible for any changes patrons make to personal computer settings and cannot guarantee personal hardware will work with the library’s wireless connection. The library staff cannot assist in making changes to the users network settings or perform any troubleshooting on the user’s own computer. The library will not be responsible for any information that is compromised, or for any damage caused to users own hardware or software due to security issues or consequences caused by viruses, hacking or library systems.

Because of the limited number of public access computers, the library reserves the right to enforce rules to provide equitable Internet access for all patrons

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