

**Morgan County Public Library**  
**Computer Usage Policy and Disclaimer**

*Approved by the Board of Trustees December 18, 2023*

**Introduction**

This document constitutes a Library-wide policy for the management of computer data networks and the resources that they make available, stand-alone computers that are owned and administered by the Morgan County Public Library, and patrons' personal devices that are utilizing the Library's wireless network. The policy reflects the ethical principles of the Library, and indicates, in general, the privileges and responsibilities associated with computer use in the Library.

**General Policies:**

**Internet and External Networks:**

Computer users who use networks or facilities not owned by the Library will adhere to the policies and procedures established by the administrators of these networks and facilities. (This information can usually be obtained from the network in question.) Use of Library computers and of patron devices utilizing the Library's networks must follow the guidelines of any and all networks traversed.

**Email**

The Library does not offer email accounts. Public internet computers must not be reconfigured through Outlook or other mail programs to access personal email. However, users may use such services as Hotmail, Gmail, or other web-based mail programs to access their email.

**Legal Use**

Computing resources may be used only for legal purposes by public and staff. Examples of unacceptable purposes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Harassment, cyberbullying, libeling or slandering
- Destruction or damage to equipment, software, or data belonging to the Library, other organizations, or other users
- Disruption or unauthorized monitoring of electronic communication
- Unauthorized copying of copyright-protected material
- The transmission or reception of obscene materials, or the publicly visible display of pictures featuring bodily exposure or sexual acts, which constitute a public nuisance by depicting activities not permitted in the Library

**Ethical Use**

Computing resources should be used in accordance with the ethical standards of the Library. Examples of unacceptable use (some of which may also have legal consequences) include, but are not limited to the following:

- Violation of computer system security
- Unauthorized use of computer accounts, access codes, or network identification numbers assigned to others

- Using another patron's Library card to log on to the Library's computers
- Use of computer communications or LAN facilities in ways that unnecessarily impede the computing activities of others (including, but not limited to, random engagement of long-term network interactions)
- Violation of software license agreements
- Violations of another user's privacy

The Library also prohibits the installation of any software on Library computers, and the usage of P2P and other file sharing programs whether on the Library's computers or on private patron computers while they are utilizing the Library's wireless network.

### **Cooperative Use**

Computer users can facilitate computer use in the Library in many ways. The Library endorses the practice of cooperative computing:

- Silencing your cell phone
- Use of a removable disk drive to store files, so that files will not accumulate on the computer's hard drive
- The exercise of common sense in the use of shared resources such as printers
- A friendly attitude toward other users
- Refraining from use of any computing resource in an irresponsible manner

### **Confidentiality**

While the Library will treat any personal information it finds on the public computers as confidential, the Library offers no storage option for personal files. Therefore, it must be understood that files or email left on hard drives can be read by anyone who uses the computer until regular maintenance removes them. Requests for disclosure of information held on Library computers will be honored only if requested by the owner of the information, or if required by local, state, or federal law.

### **Sanctions**

Violators of this computer usage policy may lose computer privileges. Patrons who intentionally access inappropriate materials or violate ethical or legal uses of the computers as defined in this policy will, on the second confirmed occasion, lose their computing privileges. Illegal acts involving Library computing resources may also be subject to prosecution under local, state, and federal law.

### **NCIPA Compliance**

The Library utilizes internet filtering software that attempts to block pornography and other material that is inappropriate in the Library. However, the Library cannot make any guarantees that persons utilizing computing resources will not be able to access such materials. Computers in the children's department are for use by children under twelve years of age, or parents accompanied by their children. Parents are advised that internet activities are not supervised and that it is their responsibility to educate their children and to protect them from any such dangers. We state that these dangers include exposure to pornography and possible contact with dangerous individuals through social media, chat rooms, instant messaging and email. If

parents wish to disallow a minor's access to the internet, we will withhold all unsupervised internet privileges until the age of eighteen is reached, or parental consent is granted. Minors are required to read and agree to this policy of internet usage before they are given access to the internet. They are cautioned herein against engaging in any and all criminal activities involving computer usage, such as hacking or cyberbullying. Restriction of a minor's access to harmful materials is to be regulated through parental guidance and strict enforcement of the Library's Computer Usage policy, in conjunction with the Library's internet filtering software.

### **Wireless Network Access Limitations and Guidelines**

Patrons utilizing the Library's wireless network are expected to follow the same rules and guidelines for usage of a public computer terminal. Patrons found to be in violation of any of these rules or guidelines will have access to the wireless network disabled.

There is no age restriction on wireless users, however parents of minor children should be aware of the potential dangers of unsupervised internet usage and accept responsibility for their children's use of the internet.

Patrons may plug their laptops and electronic devices into the Library's power outlets as long as it does not pose a hazard to others. Electronic devices may not be left unattended. You may be asked to move or to use your power source if library staff determines that your power cord poses a hazard. Patrons are not allowed to unplug library equipment to accommodate their power needs, nor are they allowed to plug into the Library's network jacks.

Use of the wireless network in the Children's Department at the Main Library is limited to children or adults accompanied by children.

### **Disclaimer**

Since the internet is a global electronic network, there is no state or county control of its users or content. The internet and its available resources may contain material of a controversial nature. The Library makes attempts to censor access to material and information that may be offensive, but cannot make a guarantee. Parents of minors or children must accept responsibility for their children's use of the Internet through the Library networks. Parents are encouraged to visit the Netsmartz Workshop created by the National Center for Missing or Exploited Children at [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org) for more information.

Library staff cannot control the availability of information links, which may change rapidly and unpredictably. Nor does the Library endorse that all sources on the internet are accurate, complete, or current. Users need to use judgment in questioning the validity of information found on the internet. The Morgan County Public Library assumes no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from use of any of its networks or public computer terminals.

All patrons who use the Library's computer equipment must agree that they have read and understood this policy.