



## **WASHINGTON PARISH LIBRARY**

### **Internet Access Policy**

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The Washington Parish Library is committed to providing access to a broad range of information resources, including those available through the internet, to meet the educational, informational, and recreational needs of its patrons. In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), this policy outlines the Library's approach to providing internet access while ensuring the safety and security of minors.

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### **Access to the Internet**

The Washington Parish Library offers free access to the internet on public computers, Wi-Fi networks, and through library-owned laptops and hotspots that are available for checkout. Library patrons, including both adults and minors, may use Library services to access information, conduct research, and communicate.

### **Children's Computers and Devices**

Children under the age of 12 may access the computers and tablets in the Children's Section that are provided by the Library for playing educational games. These devices are restricted to specific apps and do not have internet access to ensure a safe and controlled environment for young patrons to experience technology.

### **Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) Compliance**

In accordance with CIPA, Washington Parish Library takes the following measures to ensure the protection of minors from harmful online content:

#### **1. Internet Filtering**

- The Library uses filtering technology to block access to content that is obscene, contains sexually explicit images of minors, or is harmful to minors.
- The filter is applied to all Library computers and devices accessing the internet through the Library's network, including the public Wi-Fi.
- Library staff may disable the filtering software for adults (ages 18 and older) upon request for legitimate research or other lawful purposes.

## **2. Supervision of Minors**

- Children under the age of 12 are not permitted to use public computers for internet access.
- Children aged 12 and older may use the public computers for internet access only with written parental or guardian consent, which can be revoked by the parent or guardian at any time.
- The Library encourages parents or guardians to guide their children's internet usage and to discuss appropriate online behavior. While filters are in place, no filtering system is perfect. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to oversee the online activities of their children.
- Library staff will assist minors in using the internet but cannot supervise all internet use. The Library cannot act in loco parentis.

## **3. Time Limits for Computer Access**

- When demand for computer access is high, the Library reserves the right to implement time limits on public computer use to ensure equitable access for all patrons.
- In these situations, patrons will be limited to 1 hour on the computer with the option to return to the queue at the end of their time.

## **4. Prohibited Activities** Patrons may not use Library internet services to:

- Access material that is obscene or contains sexually explicit depictions of minors.
- Engage in illegal activities or violate copyright laws.
- Harass, intimidate, or harm others.

## **Privacy, Security, and Cyber Safety**

To ensure a safe and secure online environment, the Washington Parish Library promotes the following privacy, security, and cyber safety practices for all patrons:

### **1. Password Protection**

- Patrons should not share their passwords or personal login information with Library staff or other patrons.
- Library staff will never request a patron's password, and patrons should avoid disclosing their passwords in public spaces while using Library computers, Wi-Fi, laptops, or hotspots.

### **2. Personal Information**

- Patrons are urged not to share sensitive personal information, such as social security numbers and financial information when using public computers or the Library's internet services.
- The Library cannot guarantee the security of personal information

transmitted over its internet services.

### **3. Device Security**

- While the Library uses system recovery software to delete any personal information, including the browsing history, on public computers and circulating laptops after each use, the Washington Parish Library cannot guarantee that the software will always function correctly. In the rare event of a malfunction, some data may remain on the computer, and the Library cannot be held responsible for any privacy or security issues that may arise as a result.
- Patrons are strongly encouraged to log out of personal accounts and remove personal data before leaving a public computer or returning a Library-owned device.
- The Library is not responsible for any lost, compromised, or misused data during or after the use of library internet services, including on laptops and hotspots checked out from the library.

### **4. Internet Use Monitoring**

- While the Library makes every effort to maintain privacy, patrons should be aware that internet use is not completely private. The Library does not monitor individual online activities unless it is required in order to enforce this policy or as required by law.

## **Public Wi-Fi in Non-Library Locations**

In addition to the internet services provided within the Library, the Washington Parish Library also maintains Wi-Fi access points at several non-library locations for public use. These locations are subject to the same filtering and security measures as those within the Library building.

## **Laptops and Hotspots for Checkout**

Library laptops and hotspots are available for checkout by patrons. Internet use on these devices is subject to the same policies as internet use within the Library, including the content filtering and prohibited activities outlined above. Patrons are responsible for complying with all Library internet policies when using these devices.

## **Enforcement and Violations**

- Library staff have the authority to enforce this policy and may take appropriate action, including revoking internet access privileges, if a patron violates the policy.

- Complaints about blocked or unblocked content can be submitted to the Library Administration and will be reviewed in accordance with the Library's procedures.

### **Disclaimer**

The Library is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information accessed on the internet. Users access the internet at their own discretion and risk.

### **Review and Revision of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually or as necessary to remain compliant with legal requirements and meet the needs of our Library community.