

## Internet Safety Policy

### Introduction

As part of its mission to provide public access to technology and information, the BHM Regional Library provides access to the Internet. However, the Internet is an unregulated medium and the library cannot guarantee the completeness, accuracy, or currency of information found online. As with all library materials, patrons are encouraged to exercise critical judgment when evaluating the validity of Internet resources. The BHM Regional Library assumes no responsibility for damages, direct or indirect, that result from a patron's use of the Internet or library computer equipment.

### Education, Supervision and Monitoring

The BHM Regional Library is committed to providing a safe space for patrons of all ages to use the Internet. Public computers are monitored by library staff but caregivers play an important role in supervising their minor children. Children under the age of 10 must be supervised by a caregiver 16 or older while using Internet-enabled library computers.

Library staff members provide general guidance for adults, teens, and children in the selection and use of age-appropriate materials. However, their advice is not tailored to the opinions or perspectives of each individual or family that uses the library. Caregivers are encouraged to discuss Internet safety with their children, particularly the safe and secure use of electronic communications like email and social media. More information about Internet safety is available through the library's website.

### Inappropriate Material and Network Usage

In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act, filtering software is provided at all public computers to prevent access to materials deemed obscene, harmful to minors, or child pornography. The BHM Regional Library affirms the right of individuals to access constitutionally protected material. Adult users may request that filters be disabled and minors may request that filters be relaxed for bona fide research or other lawful purposes. Unauthorized electronic access, including hacking and other unlawful activities, is prohibited. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors is also prohibited.

### Penalties for Misuse

All patrons who access the Internet at BHM Libraries must abide by the library's Internet Safety Policy. This applies to patrons who use library devices and to patrons who use their own devices. Patrons who

do not follow the policy will be asked to leave and multiple violations will result in a ban on library computer use.

## **Definitions**

Key terms are defined as in the Children's Internet Protection Act.

## **Rules for Internet Use**

- By accessing the Internet at any BHM Regional Library location, patrons agree to comply with the Internet Safety Policy.
- Patrons under the age of 10 must be supervised by a caregiver 16 or older while using Internet-enabled library computers.
- Patrons must abide by the library's time limits. The library sets time limits on the use of public computers to ensure service to everyone. Time limits depend on demand and may vary by location.
- Materials may be printed in black and white at 15 cents per page, or in color at 50 cents per page. Color printing is not available at all locations.
- Patrons are responsible for all materials they print, even if the pages are printed accidentally.
- Patrons may not change or alter any of the computer's hardware or software.
- The library cannot offer unlimited instruction in computer use.
- Harrassment, cyberbullying, and other harmful activities are not permitted.
- Patrons will not access any materials deemed obscene, harmful to minors, or child pornography.
- Patrons will not engage in illegal activities or unauthorized electronic access such as hacking.
- Minor patrons will practice safe online communication and will not give out personal information to strangers.

Policy adopted by the BHM Regional Library Board: April 1998

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