

WESTBROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY INTERNET SAFETY POLICY

The Westbrook Public Library is a department of the Town of Westbrook and is a taxpayer-supported institution. As a result, the Library Board is responsible for establishing policies and rules of conduct to protect the rights and safety of all library patrons, volunteers, and staff, and for preserving and protecting the Library's materials, equipment, facilities, and grounds.

In order to meet the information needs of its users, the Westbrook Public Library provides public access to the Internet. The Internet is an electronic information network connecting computer resources throughout the world. Westbrook Public Library is unable to monitor or control the content of material available through this medium and library patrons use it at their own risk. While much of the information on the Internet is of very high quality, some material may not be accurate, authoritative, appropriate, or timely. Parents/guardians of children under 18 are responsible for their children's use of the Internet.

The Westbrook Public Library's Internet Safety Policy is designed to promote access to the Internet while protecting children from exposure to materials that are "harmful to minors," as defined by federal law, as well as the public from unlawful access to, and use or disclosure of, personal information.

Choosing and Evaluating Sources:

Information consumers must evaluate the validity and appropriateness of information found on the Internet. In an effort to assist its users, the Westbrook Public Library has Library staff available to assist its patrons to use the Internet in a safe, effective, and efficient manner. Finally, in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA"), the Library has implemented "technology protection measures" (i.e., software filtering) on all of its Internet-accessible computers.

Filtering:

It is the policy of the Westbrook Public Library to uphold the rights 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 Westbrook Public Library will implement technology protection measures (Internet filtering) for all Internet-accessible computers and other electronic devices using the Internet service provided by or through the Westbrook Public Library.

The technology protection measure/filtering software will, to the extent practicable, protect against access by staff and patrons, both minors and adults, to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors as defined by federal law. Computer users should be aware, however, that the Library cannot and does not guarantee that the filtering software will block all obscenity, child pornography, or materials that are harmful to minors nor can the Library guarantee that the filtering software will not restrict access to sites that may have legitimate research or other value. Users should be aware that Internet filtering software installed for CIPA compliance should not substitute for individual judgment and/or parental involvement and oversight. As the law requires, the Library will disable filtered Internet access to persons 18 or older who request it for bona fide research or any other lawful purposes. Users may speak with a Library staff to request unblocking of a blocked site or to report a site that was inadvertently blocked.

Education and Monitoring:

Parents/guardians must assume responsibility for deciding which library resources are appropriate for their own children. Parents or legal guardians should guide their children in use of the Internet and inform them about materials they should not use. Parents/guardians are encouraged to make themselves familiar with information about Internet safety. Our librarians are available to provide more information. It is not the responsibility of Library staff to monitor internet access for its patrons, regardless of age.

Inappropriate Internet Use:

As required by CIPA, prevention of inappropriate Internet use includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking,' and other unlawful activities; (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and (c) dissemination and viewing of obscene visual depictions, child pornography, and/or other materials harmful to minors.

User Security:

Computer users should be aware that the Internet is not a secure medium and that third parties may be able to obtain information regarding users' activities. Westbrook Public Library will not release information on the use of specific Internet resources by members of the public except as required by law or necessary for the proper operation of the Library.

Compliance:

The Library reserves the right to take appropriate action to insure compliance with this policy

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