

Internet Policy

The Internet may contain material of a controversial nature. It is the responsibility of parents to monitor their children's Internet activities.

The following policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees at a meeting held on September 23, 2002.

The Board of Trustees of the Half Hollow Hills Community Library recognizes that computers and the Internet are essential components of the library's mission to facilitate and encourage the unrestrained pursuit and exchange of knowledge, ideas, expression, experience and opinion. They further recognize that a library that limits access to information undermines its credibility with the community it serves. By making information available and accessible, libraries enable individuals to exercise their First Amendment right to seek and receive information and ideas without review or censorship by government.

The Internet offers access to many valuable sources of information and ideas. However, it is a fluid environment with constantly changing content and format. Much of the information available on the Internet may be inaccurate, incomplete and dated and many of the ideas and materials one encounters may be offensive or harmful to some members of our community, particularly children.

The Trustees do not endorse the viewpoints or vouch for the information available from the Internet. Nor do the Trustees monitor or control what information or ideas are accessible. Therefore, neither the Trustees nor the library staff can be held responsible for the material available on the Internet through the Library's computers and the Internet access provided by the Suffolk Cooperative Library System SuffolkWeb System.

The Trustees recognize and support the constitutional rights of adults to decide what material to view on the Internet within the confines of their homes or other areas where there is an expectation of privacy. A patron who uses a public computer in a public library should not have a similar expectation of privacy, particularly when the information displayed on the computer screen can be viewed by other patrons and library staff, even with a privacy screen.

The New York State Legislature in enacting New York's obscenity laws and numerous courts when interpreting such laws have recognized the important role community standards play in defining what material is obscene or of a sexually offensive or harmful nature. The Trustees are confident that by employing such standards they and the library staff can determine whether material displayed on a public library computer screen by an adult or accessed by a minor is obscene or harmful.

It is, therefore, the intention of the Board of Trustees to enact a policy which seeks to prohibit the public viewing, display or distribution from library computers of sexually explicit, obscene materials or materials harmful to minors. The use of library computers and Internet access for unlawful purposes shall also be prohibited. To the extent possible the confidentiality of all users of library computers shall be protected. However, enforcement of this policy will necessitate that the library staff record the name of patrons who utilize library computers to access the Internet from library facilities. Moreover, in order to enforce this policy the Trustees authorize the Library Director to permit staff or SCLS personnel to monitor or track sites visited or material downloaded by a user when there is reasonable cause to believe this policy is being violated.



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Notwithstanding the Trustees and library staff's best efforts to develop and enforce this policy it is up to the individual adult user to determine what is appropriate to view on the Internet and for parents and guardians to determine what is appropriate for their minor children.

This policy is based on the premise that what is prohibited and regulated is the public display or distribution of obscene or harmful materials by adults and the access to such material by minors. This policy does not seek to regulate the private viewing of such material by adults.

In enacting this policy the Trustees have not diminished their commitment to each citizen's right to unrestrained access to knowledge, ideas and thought. The policy does not seek to regulate content but does seek to place reasonable restraints on the public display or distribution of certain materials by adults or the viewing of such material by minors.

In developing this policy the Trustees have been guided by the following American Library Association statements on access to information: The Library Bill of Rights, The Freedom to Read Statement, ALA and Filtering, Guidelines and Considerations for Developing a Public Library Internet Use Policy.

The Board of Trustees therefore enacts the following policy regarding the use of library computers:

1. Use of any library computer to display, print, transmit or distribute any obscene or sexually explicit material or material harmful to minors is prohibited;
2. Obscene or sexually explicit material is defined as text, pictures or sound which the average adult applying contemporary community standards would find primarily appeals to a prurient interest in sex and lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value;
3. Material harmful to minors is defined as material which includes descriptions or representations of nudity, sexual content, or sexual excitement that appeal to the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors and are patently offensive to the prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable for minors and which lack serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value for minors;
4. Any individual using Library computers may not make unauthorized disclosure, use or dissemination of personal identification information regarding any minors;
5. Library staff shall have the right to terminate the use of any computer which is used in violation of this policy;
6. Before terminating the use of a computer used in violation of this policy the user of the computer shall be asked to remove the offending material from the screen or delete or dispose of the offending material and be advised of his or her right to appeal the determination that such material is obscene, sexually explicit or harmful to minors to the Board of Trustees;
7. A patron who wishes to appeal shall print out or preserve the offending material or record the web site or address and provide such material or address together with their name, mailing address and phone number to the staff member. The patron who desires to appeal shall within 15 days mail or deliver a written request to appeal to the Board of Trustees;
8. Upon receipt of the request for review the appealing party shall be notified of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees and his or her right to attend and be heard by the Board;
9. At such meeting the Trustees shall, after review of the material and any presentation by the appealing party, determine if such material is obscene or sexually explicit;



10. Prior to using any library computer to access the Internet all users shall be required to indicate their agreement to adhere to this policy;
11. Installation, downloading or modification of software is prohibited;
12. Users will respect copyright laws and licensing agreements;
13. Users will not make any attempt to gain unauthorized access to restricted files or networks or to damage or modify computer equipment, files or software. Users who damage computers or computer programs through careless treatment, or in an attempt to make an unauthorized copy, will be charged the replacement cost of the damaged program, and/or the repair cost of the computer.
14. Use of the Internet on Library computers by minor children will require a separate signed permission slip by a parent/guardian. Children under the age of five (5) must be accompanied by an adult when using a Library computer.
15. Any adult Half Hollow Hills Community Library card holder in good standing, eighteen years of age or older, may apply for an Internet (SuffolkWeb) account. The applicant may be asked show proof of age.
16. Parents are required to apply in person for SuffolkWeb accounts for their children under 18 years of age. Parents assume responsibility to monitor the Internet activity of their minor children.
17. To address the issue of access by minors to inappropriate material on the Internet, including material that is harmful to minors, the Library:
 1. Develops and maintains links to web sites for children and teens;
 2. Links to Internet Safety materials on the Internet for children, teens and their parents.
18. Loss of "library card holder in good standing" status will result in the cancellation of a patron's Internet (SuffolkWeb) account.
19. Half Hollow Hills Community Library and the Suffolk Cooperative Library System assume no responsibility for the content, quality, accuracy or currency of information obtained through the Internet.
20. Account holders are responsible for the proper use of their Internet (SuffolkWeb) accounts and for understanding and complying with the Suffolk County Cooperative Library System's "Acceptable Use Policy". Failure to comply may result in the cancellation of an individual's account.
21. Accounts are not transferable; patrons will be held responsible if their accounts are accessed and misused by others.
22. Sending messages simultaneously to multiple lists for the transmittal of chain letters, advertisements, or other mass solicitation (spamming) is grounds for suspension of Internet privileges.
23. Any user's traffic which crosses another network may be subject to that network's acceptable use policy.
24. Attempts to degrade, destroy or otherwise disrupt SuffolkWeb performance are prohibited.
25. As this Internet service does not have unlimited capacity, please be courteous to other users when accessing the service from home or at the Library, and observe the following guidelines.
 1. Limit use to one hour.
 2. Delete e-mail promptly or save to a folder.
 3. Keep your directory clean. Save files to a floppy disk.
 4. Log-off the system before editing and printing downloaded files.
26. Prospective users of Internet stations in the Library may be required to attend an orientation or sign a waiver stating that they have a thorough knowledge of how to use the Internet.
27. Internet stations are available in the Library on a first come, first serve basis. Use of an Internet station is limited to one hour if others are waiting. Residents of the Half Hollow Hills library district are given first priority.
28. Printing is permitted; copying charges are posted.



29. The Suffolk Cooperative Library System acting as administrator of SuffolkWeb reserves the right to:
1. Remove the account of any user who does not adhere to the policy described above.
 2. Remove any account which has not been used in six months.
 3. Notify any user that he/she is using a disproportionate share of disk space and that his/her immediate downloading or deletion of files is necessary.
 4. Delete files from any user's account if that user, once notified, has failed to clean his/her directory within one week of notification.
 5. Users are required to adhere to all policies stipulated in SuffolkWeb user manuals.

Approved by the Board, September 23, 2002



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