

## **Somerset County Library System**

### **INTERNET, WIRELESS NETWORK AND COMPUTER USE STATEMENT**



#### **Introduction**

The Somerset County Library Commission has adopted this statement as an expression of the library system's practices and policies with regard to public use of library computers, the SCLS wireless network and Internet services.

The Internet contains material that is personally, professionally and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages. Internet sites, as well as proprietary electronic databases made available to SCLS users, are valuable tools for providing information, materials and library services. However, the vast content of the Internet is unregulated and includes some material that may be biased, inaccurate, offensive to some users, and/or illegal. SCLS has no control over the information on the Internet, and cannot be held responsible for its content.

Facilitating freedom of speech and access to information is fundamental to the mission of the Somerset County Library System. SCLS offers **unfiltered access** to the Internet. Library users are responsible for making decisions about what kind of information they and/or their children access. SCLS, unlike schools, does not serve *in loco parentis* (in place of parents); SCLS upholds and affirms the right of parents to determine and monitor their children's use of all library materials and resources, including the Internet.

SCLS does not monitor public use of the Internet, but SCLS acknowledges that the library is a public space shared by people of all ages. SCLS branches have attempted to balance the information needs of computer users with the rights of other library users to a safe and secure environment by shielding passersby from content displayed on public computers. To facilitate individual privacy of public computer users and limit inadvertent viewing by other library users, branches have implemented computer privacy screens, recessed terminals, and/or separate computer areas for adults and children.

SCLS staff will enforce the SCLS Policy on Conduct in the Library and on Library Grounds with regard to Internet, wireless network and computer use. When library computer users or wireless users display images that disturb others in the library or may be illegal, SCLS staff will ask these persons to discontinue such display and refer them to the SCLS Policy on Conduct.

#### **Guidelines for public use of library computers**

All visitors, regardless of age, are welcome to use the public computers at any of the branches of SCLS, provided they comply with the guidelines for use as described in this statement and the SCLS Policy on Conduct. Public computers are equipped with office software and/or Internet access. Computers in the library's Youth Services Departments are for children and/or young adults. Adults may use these computers only if they are accompanying a young person.

SCLS uses a print and time management system to manage patron use of library computers. Library users do not have to possess a library card, or be eligible for a library card, in order to use the library's computers. A single-use guest pass will be issued to individuals who do not have a

library card. Library users may initiate a computer session reservation by entering a code from a library card or guest pass. Reservations are accepted on a first come/first served basis. Public computer use is limited to a total of four hours per person per day. The length of individual public computer sessions is determined by each branch library.

SCLS does not impose a fee for using the library's public computers. There is a per page charge to print from the library's computers, as determined by the Library Commission. Payment must be made in advance of printing. The charges for color printing (where available) are higher than for black and white printing. Library users may save their work using their own storage device. Storage devices are available from the library for a donation.

Library users are not permitted to access the computer operating systems, change computer or printer settings, alter programming or do anything that may damage equipment. Library users may not utilize the library's computers or wireless network to prepare or transmit destructive computer codes, access other computers without authorization or do anything illegal. Failure to use the Internet appropriately and responsibly as defined in this policy, and/or failure to comply with this or other library rules may result in the suspension of library privileges. Illegal use of library computers may result in criminal prosecution.

Library records are confidential, and public use of the Internet and/or databases is confidential. The library staff endeavors to protect each user's right to privacy with respect to information sought or received and information consulted. New Jersey law (NJSA 18A: 73-43.1-3) requires that library records that contain the names or other personally identifying details regarding library users are confidential and are disclosed only in the circumstances outlined in the Confidentiality of Library Records Policy.

### **Guidelines for public use of the library's wireless Internet network**

SCLS provides free wireless access to the World Wide Web in all library branches. Library users may connect to the wireless network in the library or on library grounds by using their personal equipment or devices (laptop, tablet computer, Smartphone, etc.) Only web-based email services (Yahoo, Hotmail, etc.) may be accessed. All other services (telnet, AIM, etc.) are blocked and some programs that depend on non-WWW protocols (Outlook, Virtual Private Networks, etc.) will not function properly.

Library users who access the library's wireless network are subject to the same Internet use guidelines as those who use library computers. Wireless users must follow the SCLS Policy on Conduct in the Library and on Library Grounds. SCLS staff is unable to provide technical assistance with users' equipment. (For more information on connecting to the wireless network, see the Wireless Internet Access document on the SCLS homepage.)

### **Guidelines for public use of SCLS online communities**

SCLS Online Communities include, but are not limited to, the SCLS homepage, SCLS-sponsored social networking sites and SCLS-sponsored blogs.

SCLS maintains a library homepage as a starting point for patron access to the Internet. The SCLS homepage includes links to selected websites on common research topics and links to

age-appropriate websites for young people. Links from the library's home page also lead to the library's electronic databases, the online catalog and pages with information about library services and programs. Sites are selected for linking based on criteria established in the library's Collection Management Plan.

All comments submitted to SCLS online communities are subject to moderation by SCLS staff. User comments may be accepted as long as they contain no profanity, vulgarity or language that may be considered offensive or threatening in any way and reveal no personal, contact, or identifying information about the user or other individuals. SCLS is not responsible for any user-submitted content; users are solely responsible for their content. SCLS may choose to withhold user-submitted content for any reason. In instances where language in user-submitted content represents a threat to life or property, moderators will immediately notify the Library Administration.

## **Disclaimer**

SCLS does not endorse the viewpoints of sites linked to its homepage or guarantee that information accessed via the Internet is accurate, current or objective. SCLS is not responsible for sites that contain material that library users may find offensive and/or inappropriate. Library users are responsible for safeguarding their personal information when using the Internet. Library users accept all risk when they use data or programs from the Internet.

SCLS is not liable for the activities of users accessing our network, equipment or electronic services. Those who use SCLS facilities, equipment, and/or our networks to either access the Internet or post comments or online reviews to its website agree to hold SCLS harmless from any liability arising from inaccurate or misleading information. SCLS is not liable for judgments, damages, or costs that may arise out of comments posted by library users to library blogs or included in online reviews of library materials.

SCLS is not liable for any damage caused to users' equipment, operating systems or files, or from any other direct or consequential injury caused to them through their use of the Internet and/or the library's network, equipment, or electronic resources. SCLS is not liable for injury or damage caused by users' inability to make full use of their allotted time because of technical difficulties. Library users are responsible for payment of any fees required by commercial Internet sites. Use of SCLS computer equipment and/or networks will constitute acceptance of this policy.

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