

Policy Type:	Operational	Policy Number: OP – 14
Policy Title:	Internet and Computer Use Policy	
Previous versions:	<i>(Internet Acceptable Use, Sept. 2012 & earlier)</i>	
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OP – 01 Internet and Computer Use

Purpose:

To define expectations and responsibilities related to the provision of Internet access as a public service, and of computer equipment for public use. It outlines library services provided, user responsibilities, staff responsibilities, and consequences of inappropriate behaviour or illegal activity.

Scope:

This policy applies to and defines the responsibilities of people using the library internet service whether inside or outside the library facility, people using their own devices, people using computer equipment provided by the library, and people accessing the Internet by any other means within HPL space.

Policy Statement:

The Hanover Public Library (HPL) Board recognizes the Internet's value as a resource for information, learning, communication, entertainment, inspiration and discovery.

The Board endorses the use of the Internet as an essential source of information to complement traditional library collections. It serves as a channel to connect people with the library, its services and resources.

The Board provides resources to encourage and empower people in our community learning to use this technology effectively.

The Board intends to provide computer and Internet resources fairly and equally to all library users.

The Board also understands that use of the Internet has inherent risks, and strives to provide a safe, inclusive space for our community.

Policy Guidelines:

The Library provides free public Internet access for everyone to use including Library members and other visitors.

Free wireless Internet access is available. There is no time limit or registration required for use of the wireless network.

The Library also provides computers with Internet connections for public use. Sessions are limited and users are required to register with staff before using them.

Users are advised that the library cannot control or monitor material available on the Internet. HPL recognizes that in addition to the many valuable resources available on the Internet, some resources are illegal, misleading and/or inaccurate. Others may be considered by some people to be offensive, objectionable and/or intimidating.

The library public network is open and unsecured. The Library does not assume responsibility or liability for any direct or indirect damages resulting from use of the library computers, connecting to the library network or using the Internet. Users choosing to use these services are advised to protect their devices, settings, data and passwords, as well as take steps to avoid exposure to spyware, viruses and other harmful software and breaches of privacy.

In particular when using the wireless network, the Library recommends that personal data such as credit card details, online banking information and passwords should not be transmitted.

Internet access computers are situated in a public area shared by people of all ages and sensibilities. Users are encouraged to be respectful of the rights and sensibilities of others.

Available power outlets may be used in designated areas where a device's power cord will not present a tripping hazard or block access for library users or staff. It is recommended that users charge their battery before coming to the Library.

Responsibilities:

Library Responsibilities

HPL will facilitate and promote public access to information for all users so that the community may benefit from the use of the Internet. HPL will proactively promote user education, media awareness and internet safety.

HPL will respect the right of users to privacy and confidentiality with regards to resources consulted, acquired or transmitted and information sought or received. In respect to the range of sensibilities and viewpoints of our community, HPL will endeavour to minimize the opportunity for unintentional exposure by people using library space to content being accessed by another library user.

HPL will support the right and responsibility of parents or legal guardians to guide, monitor and determine their children's use of library materials and resources. The Library will not act in place of or in the absence of a parent. HPL will endeavour to proactively support children, parents and guardians in safe use of the Internet. HPL will endeavour to minimize unintentional exposure of children and teens to internet content that is not age appropriate.

HPL will assume responsibility for the information provided on its own web pages. However the Library is not responsible for content linked to its website. Links to information resources do not imply endorsement.

HPL will strive to provide reliable services, but Internet access cannot be guaranteed. The Library shall assume no liability due to Internet access being unavailable.

HPL will endeavour to provide equitable access and service to all. If required, the library may apply user bandwidth restrictions to maintain service performance.

HPL will maintain and protect equipment and resources from neglect and misuse, and reserves the right to withdraw access to computers or the network if necessary.

Staff Responsibilities

HPL staff members are intermediaries between users and internet resources and are essential to the provision of relevant, accessible, equitable and high quality library services.

Staff will support the user in responsible use of the Library internet service.

Staff will provide assistance to users within reasonable limits. They will provide help accessing programs and the Internet on library equipment, and using library provided online resources. General knowledge level help and research into using well known features will be provided.

Staff will provide basic instructions on how to connect to the wireless network but cannot provide technical assistance. No guarantee can be made that users will be able to make a connection.

Staff will not alter settings, install software or attempt technical troubleshooting or repairs on a user's own equipment. Staff may refer users to library services offering learning assistance by appointment, or provide a list of local tech support businesses.

Staff members are entrusted with the obligation to ensure that all rules of computer use and internet acceptable use guidelines are followed. Staff will advise patrons of appropriate conduct as required and state consequences of not following the rules of conduct should unacceptable behaviour continue or be repeated.

User Responsibilities

All users are guests on the system and should act with respect and consideration for one another. Users are expected to abide by the following terms and conditions.

Act in a manner that will not disturb or interfere with other library users. Everyone, including people using the Library's Internet services, is responsible for following the Library's Code of Conduct which are designed to provide a welcoming and safe environment for the enjoyment of the public and staff.

Respect library resources. Avoid tampering with computers, printers and other devices owned by the Library or other users. This includes but is not limited to:

- Using encryption keys or locking mechanisms on the computers.
- Installing any software programs.
- Subverting or attempting to subvert any security devices in either software or hardware format which the Library has installed
- Installing or attempting to install viruses or other programs designed to damage or alter software on the Library's computers and other devices, the local area network or the Internet, or seeking unauthorized access to any computer system
- Sending unsolicited commercial material or spamming
- Deleting or altering system files or programs

Respect other people's property and privacy, and make no attempt to gain access to or modify files, passwords or data belonging to others.

Take responsibility for determining what material they wish to access and assessing for themselves the accuracy, currency, reliability and legality of the information. Users are responsible for the websites they visit and all content displayed.

Refrain from viewing pornographic or sexually explicit content (websites, files, text, graphics etc.)

Abide by local, provincial or federal criminal laws, including but not limited to those that prohibit obscenity, child pornography, sedition and the incitement of hate.

Be conscious of and comply with copyright, intellectual property and software license requirements.

Use the Internet appropriately, for purposes consistent with the HPL's *Intellectual Freedom Policy* and the Ontario Library Association's *Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual*. Each user is personally and legally responsible for his/her actions while using the Library's internet access.

Be aware that users may be held responsible for any virus they introduce to the system.

Plan their time responsibly, and be ready to save their work and end their session promptly when required or before the Library closes.

Not hold the library responsible for any loss of data.

Intellectual Freedom:

The Library uses filtering technology to prevent inadvertent access to websites with content inconsistent with the Internet *Use Guidelines* and the Library's *Code of Conduct Policy*. Internet use guidelines continue to apply.

The Library's filtering software does not monitor electronic communication, including email and chat rooms.

The Library recognizes that filtering software is not perfect. Users may report the addresses of sites that are not appropriately filtered to library staff.

The library supports and endorses the principles expressed in our Library's *Intellectual Freedom Policy*, and the Ontario Library Association's *Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual*. In accordance with the principle of access to all expressions of knowledge, users may request access to legal filtered sites. Within reason and as staff resources and library technology allow, access to requested content will be provided.

Privacy:

Privacy of users is not guaranteed. Users are encouraged to make every possible effort to safeguard their personal, confidential, or business information transmitted via the Internet using the Library's computers or wireless network.

Library computers are equipped with a "clean slate" program that will erase daily, all record of session activity, and any saved files. Users are encouraged to delete their browsing history and temporary internet files at the end of each session so their personal information is not accessible by any subsequent users.

General usage statistics are compiled by library staff, including numbers of people using our internet facilities and length of time used. The Library will not keep records that can identify internet users or their usage data for longer than required to compile service statistics.

Internet Use by Children:

The Library supports the right and responsibility of parents or legal guardians to determine, monitor, and guide their children's use of Library services and resources, including the use of the Internet. The Library does not act in place of, or in the absence of a parent or guardian.

Parents are encouraged to supervise and participate in their child's Internet use and to inform the child if there are resources they do not want the child to access.

While the Library has software to block some content, it is not designed for use by children. The Library assumes no liability in the event that a user reaches a site assumed to be filtered. The Library is not responsible for children's use of Internet resources accessed via the Library's computers, or our network, or other people's devices.

Users are reminded to adhere to the Library's *Code of Conduct Policy* and *Unattended Children Policy* which states that children under 10 need to be accompanied by a responsible parent/guardian/caregiver or sibling, in accordance with Ontario law and any Children's Aid Society guidelines. Library personnel are not responsible for children who are in the library unattended.

Consequences of Misuse:

The Library will take action on any inappropriate behaviours related to use of the HPL Internet Service, such as intimidation, harassment, bullying, etc., in accordance with the Library's *Code of Conduct Policy*.

The Library will take action against unlawful activity; may contact the police and will cooperate in any lawful investigation of criminal activity. Complaints that a user is accessing legally prohibited material may also result in HPL contacting the police.

Any person violating Library rules for the use of Library internet service or other wireless services in Library space risks suspension of Library privileges, exclusion from the Library for a period of time, banning and/or prosecution.

Related Documents:

Hanover Public Library, ***Code of Conduct Policy***
 Hanover Public Library, ***Unattended Children Policy***
 Hanover Public Library, ***Intellectual Freedom Policy***

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