



Approving Official(s): IT Manager, Library Director, Board of Directors.

Responsible Office: WCPL Williamsburg, KY

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INTERNET SAFETY & FILTERING POLICY

POLICY

Table of Contents

INTERNET SAFETY & FILTERING POLICY	1
Policy Statement	3
Purpose.....	3
Audience	3
Definitions.....	3
1. Technology Protection Measures	3
2. Limitations of Filtering	3
3. Disabling Filters.....	3
4. Appropriate Use	4
5. Privacy and Security of Minors	4
Disclaimer	4
Policy Review	4
Policy Implementation.....	4
Consequences of Violating this Policy	5
Policy URL:	5

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to ensure equitable, safe, and responsible use of the Whitley County Public Library's computers and internet resources. These services are provided to support the Library's mission of offering informational, educational, and recreational opportunities to the community while maintaining a welcoming and respectful environment for all users.

The Whitley County Public Library is committed to providing free and open access to information while maintaining a safe and lawful environment for all library users. In compliance with Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Library implements and enforces technology protection measures on all library-owned computers and networks that access the Internet.

Purpose

In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and as a condition of receiving E-Rate funding, the Whitley County Public Library has adopted this Internet Safety and Filtering Policy. This policy is designed to protect users, especially minors—from access to inappropriate online material and to promote safe, responsible use of electronic resources.

Audience

This policy applies to all individuals who use the Whitley County Public Library's computers, internet access, and related technology resources, including patrons, guests, and visitors of all ages.

Definitions

1. Technology Protection Measures

The library uses filtering technology on all computers with Internet access, including wireless connections, to block or filter visual depictions that are:

- Obscene, as defined in 18 U.S.C. §1460;
- Child pornography, as defined in 18 U.S.C. §2256; or
- Harmful to minors, as defined in CIPA (47 U.S.C. §254(h)(7)).

Filtering is applied to both staff and public computers that provide access to the Internet.

2. Limitations of Filtering

- No filtering technology is perfect. Some inappropriate content may not be blocked, and some legitimate sites may be mistakenly filtered.
- Parents and guardians are responsible for monitoring and guiding their children's Internet use.
- Filters do not substitute for parental supervision.

3. Disabling Filters

Upon request by an adult (age 17 or older), authorized library staff may temporarily disable filtering for certain websites for research or other lawful purposes. Library staff may also unblock websites that have been improperly restricted after verifying the request.

4. Appropriate Use

All Internet use must comply with the Library's Internet and Computer Use Policy.

Users may not:

- Access or distribute obscene or illegal materials.
- Attempt to bypass or disable filtering software.
- Engage in any form of hacking, fraud, or network abuse.

5. Privacy and Security of Minors

The library strives to protect the safety and security of minors while using email, chat rooms, or other forms of electronic communication. Staff and parents should educate minors about:

- Never share personal information (such as full name, address, phone number, or school).
- Reporting inappropriate or threatening online behavior to a trusted adult or library staff member.

Disclaimer

The Whitley County Public Library is not responsible for the accuracy, quality, or legality of content found on the Internet. Users access online information at their own discretion.

Policy Review

This policy is subject to periodic review and may be updated as technology, laws, or library needs change.

Policy Implementation

The Internet Safety and Filtering Policy is implemented through consistent staff oversight, clearly communicated expectations, and technical safeguards designed to ensure equitable and responsible use of Library technology resources.

Access to Library computers and Internet services is managed through authentication procedures such as library card verification or guest passes. Time limits and reservation systems **may** be used to promote fair access for all patrons.

Acceptable use expectations are communicated to patrons through posted signage, the Library website, and verbal guidance from staff when necessary. Staff are authorized to address misuse of Library computers or Internet access in a respectful and non-confrontational manner.

To comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Library utilizes Internet filtering software on public access computers. Procedures are in place to allow adult patrons to request the temporary disabling of filters for lawful purposes, consistent with Library guidelines.

Library staff receive training on the enforcement of this policy, including how to respond to violations, document incidents when appropriate, and apply consequences consistently. Progressive enforcement measures may include warnings, temporary suspension of privileges, or further action in accordance with Library procedures.

The Library regularly reviews and updates technology systems and this policy to ensure continued compliance with legal requirements, evolving technology, and community needs.

Consequences of Violating this Policy

Failure to comply with the Whitley County Public Library Internet Safety & Filtering Policy may result in one or more of the following actions, depending on the severity and frequency of the violation:

- **Verbal Warning**
For minor or first-time violations, Library staff may issue a verbal warning and provide guidance on acceptable use.
- **Temporary Suspension of Privileges**
Repeated or moderate violations may result in the temporary suspension of computer or Internet access privileges for a defined period.
- **Extended Suspension or Revocation of Privileges**
Serious, repeated, or intentional violations may result in an extended suspension or permanent loss of computer and Internet access privileges.
- **Immediate Termination of a Session**
Library staff may immediately end a computer session if a user's behavior is disruptive, violates Library policy, or compromises the safety or functionality of Library systems.
- **Removal from the Library**
Users who refuse to comply with staff direction or whose behavior disrupts Library operations may be asked to leave the Library in accordance with the Library's Code of Conduct.
- **Referral to Law Enforcement**
Illegal activities, including but not limited to harassment, threats, or access to unlawful content, may be reported to appropriate authorities.

All enforcement actions will be applied consistently and at the discretion of Library staff, with consideration given to the nature of the violation, prior incidents, and applicable laws.

Policy URL:

<https://whitleylibrary.org/assets/policies/cipa-policy.pdf>