

Caroline County Library

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Policy Statement

The mission of Caroline County Library is to ensure that the people of Caroline County have the right and means to free and open access to ideas and information. In doing so, the library provides access to a broad range of information resources, including those available through the Internet.

Some Internet sites may contain inaccurate, incomplete, outdated, indecent, controversial or offensive materials. Caroline County Library has no control over the information accessed through the Internet and therefore does not endorse such content. The library will not be held responsible for any inaccuracies or quality of information retrieved. Parents are responsible for monitoring their children's use of the Internet. The standards of intellectual freedom and confidentiality incorporated in Caroline County Library policies for traditional media shall apply to the use of electronic media, including the Internet.

Pursuant to § 42.1-36.1 of the Code of Virginia, Caroline County Library has created this policy in order to “(a) prohibit use by library employees and patrons of the library’s computer equipment and communications services for sending, receiving, viewing, or downloading illegal materials via the Internet, (b) prevent access by library patrons under the age of 18 to material that is harmful to juveniles, and (c) establish appropriate measures to be taken against persons who violate the policy.” For more information on the use of public computers and wireless connections at Caroline County Library, please see our *Computer Use Policy*.

Policy Regulations

Filtering

- Pursuant to § 42.1-36.1 of the Code of Virginia and in compliance with requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the library has installed filtering software on those computers that are accessible to the public and have Internet access.
- Filtering software is designed to block access to Internet sites deemed to contain pornographic or obscene content or material deemed harmful to minors.
- Any individual over the age of eighteen (18) may request to disable the filtering software for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.
- The library director and his/her designees will disable the filtering software at the receipt of such a request.
- Because no filtering solution is 100% effective, parents or legal guardians are responsible for monitoring their children's Internet use and deciding which resources are appropriate.

Acceptable Use Guidelines

- By registering for a library card, patrons agree to abide by the rules and guidelines set down in this policy.

- Individuals accessing the Internet through the library's connections are bound by local, state, and federal laws relating to copyright, security, obscenity, materials harmful to juveniles, and other laws regarding electronic media.
- Any use of Caroline County Library computers and/or Internet service that interferes with the activities of the library, its users, or its network is strictly prohibited. Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:
 - Accessing and/or viewing any graphic material considered obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors (US Code § 61-8A, VA Code § 18.2-374)
 - Accessing interactive Internet games, FTP, or Telnet
 - Using bit torrent sites
 - Harassing, bullying, libeling, or slandering
 - Using the Internet for any other illegal or unethical purpose
 - Damaging equipment
 - Altering computer hardware or software, including screen settings
 - Downloading files or installing software
 - Disrupting electronic communications
 - Violating copyright or software licensing
 - Distributing unsolicited advertising
 - Violating another user's privacy
- Users may use the library's Internet connection to access accounts, such as email, as long as they do not require any alteration of the computer's resources or files.
- Users also agree to hold harmless Caroline County Library for any liability or damage claim arising from any use or misuse of Internet access. This includes computer viruses, electrical malfunctions, power surges, data security, etc.
- Users should be aware that the Internet is not a secure medium and that third parties may be able to obtain information regarding their activities. Proper precautions should be taken and are the responsibility of the user.
- Caroline County 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.
- Library staff reserves the right to end Internet sessions when unacceptable behaviors are observed.
- The library reserves the right to limit or revoke access to its computer and network resources. Misuse or unauthorized use of library computers and information resources may result in the revocation of library privileges.
- Illegal acts involving the library's Internet resources by library staff or the public will also be subject to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities.

Access

- In order to provide quality and fair access to all patrons, the library may place restrictions on Internet users. These restrictions may include, but are not limited to:
 - Establishing time limits to prevent monopolizing of computers or Internet connections during periods of peak usage
 - Asking patrons to avoid using audio and/or video files or opening multiple applications at the same time due to bandwidth limitations
- For minor children:

- Children under the age of thirteen (13) must be under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian.
- Children under the age of sixteen (16) may use the library's Internet connection without direct supervision, but a parent or guardian must be inside the library.
- All children under the age of eighteen (18) must have parental permission to use the Internet.
- Caroline County Library cannot guarantee Internet availability, including during adverse weather conditions, system outages, and periods of peak usage.

Use of Public Wireless Network

- Filtering software does not extend to a patron's personal laptop computer but the *Internet Acceptable Use Policy* does govern what is acceptable use when a personal laptop is used within the walls or on the grounds of the library.
- Anyone using the library's connection to access the Internet agrees to abide by the library's *Internet Acceptable Use Policy* and *Computer Use Policy*.
- Wireless access is available during regular business hours.
- Time limits may be enforced during heavy or peak hours.

Staff Assistance

- Library staff provides basic assistance to patrons having problems using the Internet, but cannot offer one-on-one instruction.
- Under no circumstances can the library provide instruction or assistance in computer troubleshooting or configurations on library computers or personal electronic devices.
- The library cannot evaluate the validity or appropriateness of Internet resources.
- Help with accessing the library's wireless network may be available, but library staff will not physically handle personal electronic devices while providing assistance.
- Any patron who needs more than basic assistance and guidance is encouraged to attend scheduled library support classes and tutoring sessions.

Mobile Hotspot Lending

Caroline County Library has wireless hotspots available for check out. These devices allow patrons to access the internet outside of the library, including anywhere that has a strong cellular signal.

- In order to check out a hotspot, the patron must:
 - Be over 18 years old
 - Have a Caroline County Library card in good standing
 - Sign a user agreement acknowledging the receipt of the device, the replacement cost, and that the library cannot guarantee the strength or speed of the internet access.
- Only one device per household may be checked out at a time.
- Hotspots may be checked out for a period of three (3) weeks with no renewals. The hotspot may not be checked out again by the same patron on the same day.
- Holds may be placed on hotspots by library staff only. When a hotspot is available, patrons will be contacted by telephone. They will have 48 hours to pick up the device or it will be released to another patron.

- Patrons may not place a hold for a hotspot if they already have one checked out on their card.
- Returns:
 - Devices and their accessories must be returned at the front desk at the branch where it was checked out.
 - All components must be returned in the same condition that they were checked out.
 - Devices should not be returned in the book drop as this may damage them. Any damage resulting from hotspots being placed in the book drop are the responsibility of the patron.
 - Hotspots are not considered returned unless the device and all of its accessories are returned at the same time. Patrons will be responsible for any overdue fines that may accrue until all components are returned.
- Overdue fines are set at \$1.00 per day for a maximum of five (5) days. After the fifth day, service to the device will be turned off.
- If the hotspot or any of its components are not returned or are damaged, the patron will be charged a replacement fee. These fees are:
 - Hotspot: \$100
 - Power Cord: \$25
 - Case: \$10
- All borrowing privileges will be suspended until the device and its components are returned or until the patron pays the replacement fee for a lost or damaged device.

Adopted by Caroline Library, Inc. Board of Trustees September 10, 2009

Amended January 8, 2015

Amended and Adopted by Caroline County Board of Supervisors January 14, 2020

Amended December 14, 2021