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Bucks County PUBLIC LIBRARIES

INTERNET USE

Policy Statement

Bucks County public libraries provide access to the Internet as an electronic tool for staff and users to locate information. Providing Internet access enables the library to greatly expand its information services. Access to electronic information and communication is a privilege granted to library users.

The library receives federal funding in support of public Internet access. Federal law (CIPA, the Children's Internet Protection Act) requires libraries receiving such funding to install filters that block access to adult content, defined as visual depictions in three categories: child pornography, obscenity, and harmful to minors, on all public computers. The library uses filtering software on all computer workstations.

Regulations

Proper use of the Internet is the responsibility of the user. By using the library's computers, users agree to comply with all library regulations and all laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States.

The library may require computer users to read and sign an Internet use agreement stating they will abide by library Internet policy and computer use procedures.

It is a felony offense in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania "to display or cause to display any explicit sexual material…on any…viewing screen in such a manner that the display is visible…in any establishment where minors, as part of the general public, may be exposed to view all or any part of such materials. (Penna. Crimes Code – Sect. 5903.) Therefore, viewing of such material in the public library in view of minors or by minors will not be permitted. Violation of this provision may result in the immediate termination of the user's Internet privileges.

Not all sources on the Internet provide information that is accurate, complete, current, legal or philosophically acceptable to all people. Library users use Internet resources at their own risk. Those users who access electronic mail and other communication tools are cautioned to be aware of proper safety and security measures, and of the potential danger of disclosing personal information via the Internet.

Because parents or legal guardians may feel that some information available through the Internet is not suitable for viewing by children in their care, parental supervision is strongly advised. Parents or legal guardians, and not the library or its staff, are responsible for all information found by children on library computers. Staff members are available to assist caregivers in finding appropriate sites, and the library website has special sections developed specifically for preschoolers, children, and teens.

Upon request, library staff will disable the Internet filter for their session for adult users over the age of 18. The library reserves the right to ask for identification establishing that this federal age requirement for the removal of the filter has been met. Children under age 18 may ask to have a website unblocked temporarily for their information needs.