

VINEYARD HAVEN PUBLIC LIBRARY
PUBLIC USE OF LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Amended policy adopted by the Board of Library Trustees, June 18, 2014

INTRODUCTION

The Vineyard Haven Public Library is committed to meeting the information needs of the residents and visitors of Martha's Vineyard on a broad array of topics related to work, school, research and personal life. It is the goal of the library to provide all patrons with accurate and timely information. Access to computer technology and the Internet are among the resource options that the library offers with an eye towards providing a broad spectrum of information gathering to suit the needs of our patrons.

ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE INTERNET

The Internet can be a continuous learning experience. The paths to information are numerous and ever changing. While the resources may be useful and enriching, they may also be outdated, inaccurate, offensive and even illegal. The Internet opens a gateway to information far broader than that found in our library's collections, which have been selected and developed with our users needs in mind.

The Vineyard Haven Public Library does not monitor or exert control over information accessed through the Internet and is not responsible for the content, quality or nature of information presented. Under Chapter 151B, of the Massachusetts General Law, the library has a duty to maintain a place of public accommodation where all patrons can be free from unreasonable interference with their use and enjoyment of the library facilities.

The library staff is available as time permits to provide suggestions and ideas to help patrons with their searches. Because of the many different Internet applications available, the library is unable to provide complete technical support. An introductory course to the Internet is taught regularly.

The library supports free and open access to the Internet for all library users and believes that this is consistent with the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read, and the Freedom to View, as stated by the American Library Association and adopted by the Library Board of Trustees.

CHILDREN'S USE OF THE INTERNET

The library is aware of parental and governmental concerns about children's safety on the Internet. While instruction is provided and help offered, library staff cannot monitor individual use of the Internet. Access to the Internet carries the potential to deliberately or accidentally access inaccurate, inappropriate, or offensive material. Therefore, parents and guardians are encouraged to take an active role in their children's use of the Internet and to talk about their personal values, expectations and rules for safe behavior when using this resource.

Parents should encourage children to speak to the library staff if they get to a web site that makes them uncomfortable. The library maintains a list of appropriate sites for children on its web page, and provides basic Internet safety tips for children and adults.

All electronic resources available through the library are provided equally to library users. The library affirms the right and responsibility of parents or legal guardians to guide their children's use of all library resources, including the Internet. As is the case with all other library materials, any restriction of a child's access to the Internet is the responsibility of the child's parent or legal guardian.

Parents, or legal guardians, not the library or its staff, are responsible for the Internet, email, chat rooms and electronic resources information selected and/or accessed by their children.

PRIVACY

The library respects the users right to confidentiality and privacy. Each user is asked to respect the privacy of other computer users. Users are cautioned that the Internet is not a secure medium. All transactions, files and communications, including transmission of personal financial information, may be subject to access by third parties, whether legal or illegal. The library will not release information on the use of electronic resources by members of the public, except as required by law. Sign-up sheets used to reserve computer time are destroyed.

USE OF COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS

U.S. copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code) prohibits the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of copyrighted materials, except as permitted by the principles of "fair use". Violation of copyright laws can result in severe civil and criminal penalties. When in doubt about whether or not a use may infringe on a copyright, patrons should ask the copyright owner for permission to use or reproduce the copyrighted material. Library patrons who infringe copyrighted material may have their computer and Internet privileges suspended.

Patrons must abide by any end-user agreements or other terms and conditions required for use of downloadable media content provided by the library. If the library determines a patron is violating permitted uses of the Content, we reserve the right to suspend or terminate library privileges.

The Library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility arising from access to or use of information obtained through its electronic information systems, or any consequences thereof.

RULES FOR USING COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET:

Library users must cooperate with library staff as requested to insure equitable computer use and a safe computing environment. Patrons are required to abide by the following guidelines for use of the Library's information technology assets. Unacceptable use may result in suspension of access privileges to the computers, exclusion from the library, and possible prosecution.

- Users must be courteous and respectful when using computers and conform to the Library's Rules of Conduct.
- Children under 8 years of age must be in the company of an adult at all times while using a computer. An adult for the purpose of this policy refers to someone 18 years of age or older. Parents are responsible for their child's Internet use.
- CLAMS library cardholders may use the designated one-hour Internet access terminals once per day. All patrons may use the Express computers for 30 minutes once per day.

- Patrons are restricted to a single one hour or 30 minute session per day. Time may be extended, with staff permission, for an additional session if computers are available. Library staff may shorten a session if need demands it; or terminate a session if terminals are used inappropriately.
- Internet resources are for legal and legitimate uses only. Specific unacceptable uses are, but not limited to:
 - Tampering with icons, bookmarks, computer hardware or software.
 - Degrading or disrupting equipment or system performance.
 - Vandalizing the data of another user
 - Gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities.
 - Invading the privacy of individuals
 - Violating Federal, State or local laws
 - Harassment of other users
 - Viewing content not protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (obscenity or child pornography) or displaying this illegal content
 - Transmission of computer viruses
- The display of materials, which library staff determines is intended to or reasonably likely to create an intimidating, hostile or sexually offensive environment in the library, is prohibited.
- Use of the library computers and network in a way that violates local, state or federal laws is expressly prohibited.
- The library will charge a per-page fee for all pages processed through printers whether or not paper is provided by the Library. Applicable charges can be found in Library's Schedule of Charges and Fees.
- Personal computers using the library's wireless connection are covered by this policy.
- **Computers will be shut down 30 minutes before the library closes.**

STAFF ASSISTANCE

Library staff provides limited assistance for basic start up and navigation but cannot provide extensive personal computer instruction on-demand. Library staff will be glad to assist you as they are able and time permitting, but users must have basic computer skills. Library staff may not have knowledge of all Library computer programs, nor will they be familiar with how to use all websites. Library staff will not assist patrons with online financial transactions, or fill out applications or forms for patrons.

The staff is willing to assist patrons using their own computers, tablets or mobile devices. Library staff will work on non-Library equipment only under patron direction, and neither the Library nor its staff can be held liable if the patron's equipment is damaged.

COMPUTER INSTRUCTION

The library offers one-on-one sessions on using library resources such as the CLAMS Catalog, online databases, and downloadable audio and eBooks, and to introduce the internet and basic computing. Reference staff can also assist with finding appropriate websites, finding information on web pages, and give basic instructions for navigating the Internet and using common computer applications.

Patrons requiring instruction are encouraged to register for tutoring sessions at the Circulation or Reference desks. Scheduled one-on-one sessions may be limited to 3 per patron.

INTERRUPTION OF SERVICE

The Vineyard Haven Public Library endeavors to maintain access to the Internet. However, technical, mechanical or other problems may interrupt service. The Library is not responsible for problems that may arise when patrons are unable to connect to the Internet. Additional logins are not guaranteed after an interruption of service.

SOCIAL SOFTWARE POLICY

Social Software is defined as any web application, site or account created and maintained by the Vineyard Haven Public Library which facilitates an environment for library staff and library users to share opinions and information about library related subjects/issues. The Vineyard Haven Public Library recognizes and respects differences in opinion. Comments, posts and messages are welcome and will be reviewed before publishing. The following will be removed before publishing:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libelous statements
- Plagiarized material
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Comments totally unrelated to the content of the forum
- Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion
- Commercial promotions or spam

By posting content, the user agrees to indemnify the Vineyard Haven Public Library and its officers and employees from and against all liabilities, judgments, damages, and costs (including attorney's fees) incurred by any of them which arise out of or are related to the posted content. Forums and messaging may not be used for commercial purposes or for organized political activity.

The Vineyard Haven Public Library reserves the right to monitor content before it is posted on all their social software web sites and accounts, and to modify or remove any messages or postings that it deems, in its sole discretion, to be abusive, defamatory, in violation of the copyright, trademark right, or other intellectual property right of any third party, or otherwise inappropriate for the service. The Library also reserves the right to edit or modify any submissions in response to requests for feedback or other commentary. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Library is not obligated to take any such actions, and will not be responsible or liable for content posted by any subscriber in any forum, message board, or other area within the service.

If any user does not agree to these terms, they are not to use the service, as violation of the terms can lead to legal liability.

Social Software Policy adapted with permission from the Newton Free Library blog policy, May 12, 2008 (http://www.newtonfreelibrary.net/Services/blog_policy.htm).

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

Related policies: Patron Rules of Conduct; Patron Suspension Policy