

Internet Safety Policy

In accordance with its mission to serve as an information resource, the New Haven Free Public Library provides access to the Internet, which expands the library's information services well beyond traditional and in-house collections. The Internet is a worldwide computer network that provides access to a massive body of information. Many websites contain valuable and timely information; however, other websites contain information that is inaccurate, defamatory, illegal, obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors. Although the library provides free access to all and acknowledges its obligation to protect patrons' right to privacy, because Internet computers are located in a public space, absolute privacy cannot be guaranteed.

It is the expressed policy of the NHFPL to foster an atmosphere conducive to free inquiry, study and research, self-directed learning and civic dialogue. As with the selection of print and audiovisual materials the staff attempts to locate, evaluate and offer pathways to useful, authoritative websites for Internet users. However, because of the unregulated nature of this resource, the library cannot be held responsible for the accuracy or quality of information accessed by users.

It is the policy of the Board of the New Haven Free Public Library to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act and the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act. [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254 (h.)]

Both the Children's Internet Protection and the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act require libraries to adopt an Internet safety policy that addresses the following issues relating to minors (defined by the NCIPA as any person younger than 17 years-of-age):

- Access to "inappropriate matter";
- Safety and security of minors when using e-mail, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communication;
- Unauthorized access including hacking and other unlawful activities;
- Unauthorized disclosure of personal identification information;
- Measures designed to restrict access to harmful materials

To the extent of practical, technology protection measures (TPMs or filtering software) will be used to prevent direct access to material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors. Staff will monitor and guide young people in the use of computers and the Internet. However, parents and guardians are ultimately responsible for their children's use of the internet.

While the NHFPL attempts, through filtering software, to prevent access to materials harmful to minors and other illegal content it is technically impossible to prevent access to all objectionable material. In addition, filtering software can sometimes block legitimate sites, therefore library staff will, upon request, disable the filter for users 17 or over for any lawful purpose. Although, Library policy regarding illegal content and illegal use applies at all times. Internet access rules are posted and copies are available at the desk.

Use of the library's computer systems is considered a privilege. Library users may not use public Internet stations for unlawful purposes or to view illegal content. This will result in loss of privileges and may lead to prosecution under local, state or federal law. Computer use requires a valid library card.



The New Haven Free Public Library makes no warranties, neither expressed nor implied, for the Internet access it is providing.

Comments and complaints regarding the use of the Internet should be stated in writing and must be signed. All written complaints will be reviewed by the City Librarian and, if necessary, by the Board of Library Directors.

The Internet Safety Policy was adopted by the Board of the New Haven Free Public Library at a public meeting, following normal public notice, on June 22, 2004.

Approved by the NHFPL Board of Directors, June 22, 2004.