

## **Sunderland Public Library Internet Safety Policy**

Consistent with its mission to serve the community through the provision of information and a wide array of informational, cultural and recreational resources, the Sunderland Public Library welcomes its users to the Internet. Both patrons and staff are encouraged to become more familiar with the Internet through practice, training and independent learning.

The Internet is a telecommunications network of distinct national, regional and local computer networks each with its own governance and operational priorities. The individual systems allow access to their resources as a courtesy to users and to facilitate the free flow of information. Consequently, the Sunderland Public Library makes available access to the Internet, but cannot control, verify or otherwise validate the information located by users. Some material may be controversial and graphic in nature or considered inappropriate and/or dangerous. Also, although the Internet provides access to tremendous resources, users are encouraged to exercise caution in the use of that information and to confirm its accuracy with other sources.

Internet access is an institutional tool provided by the Sunderland Public Library and is not the property of the patrons. Patrons are advised that they have no expectation of privacy in library computers, and therefore any information or data stored on library computers, whether in connection with word processing or Internet access, may be accessed by library personnel.

In order to help protect all our patrons, the Sunderland Public Library Board of Trustees has chosen to use Internet filtering software on the Children's Room and the Young Adult Room computers.

By its very nature, the Internet is a complex resource to use. Within our limits, library staff will introduce users to our electronic resources. However, staff are unlikely to be able to assist users with extensive research or provide detailed personal instruction on the use of the network.

The Sunderland Public Library provides free access to information. Anyone is eligible to use our electronic resources. As with any other library resource, parents are encouraged to explore the Internet with their children. It is the parent who sets family standards and values and, therefore, the library cannot usurp that right nor assume that responsibility. Parents are expected to discuss access to the Internet, or any limitations on that access, with their children; parents are ultimately responsible for their children's Internet use. All users, and particularly children, must also be made aware how important it is NOT to disclose ANY personal information over the Internet.

Computing resources may only be used for legal and ethical purposes by the public and staff. Unacceptable uses of these resources by patrons or staff will result in the suspension of access privileges. Patrons may not access, display, distribute, or print images or graphics of obscene or pornographic materials or material that violates laws relating to child pornography (including but not limited to G.L. chapter 272, sections 29A,

29B, 29C), or laws relating to possession and/or distribution of obscene material or material "harmful to minors" (including but not limited to G.L. chapter 272, section 29) while using library workstations or using the Internet connection. For purposes of this policy, a matter is defined as "obscene" and/or "harmful to minors" in accordance with G.L. chapter 272, section 31. Illegal acts involving the library's computing resources may also be subject to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities. Examples of unacceptable uses of electronic resources include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Destruction of or damage to equipment, software or data belonging to the library or other users.
- Access to the library's server (hacking).
- Disruption or unauthorized monitoring of electronic equipment.
- Copying of copyright-protected material.
- Violation of computer system security.
- Modifications to the library's hardware and/or software or changing any program settings.
- Unauthorized downloading of files or programs from the Internet onto the library's computers. (This includes programs such as AOL's *Instant Messenger*.)
- Use of direct electronic communications (e.g. chat rooms).
- Use of computer accounts, access codes or network identification numbers assigned to others.
- Deliberately displaying obscene images.
- Violation of library usage policies and regulations.
- Harassment of others.
- Libeling or slandering other users.
- Violating the privacy of users.

The Sunderland Public Library does not provide email accounts to its users. However, users with existing email accounts may access them through the library's Internet terminals. The library does not accept responsibility for the privacy of possible cached (temporarily stored) messages left after such use.

As a protection against viruses, there will be no downloading of information to the library's hard drives. Diskettes are provided by the library. While the in-house use of a library diskette is free, the Sunderland Public Library Board of Trustees suggests a \$0.50 donation for the external use of a library diskette. Users are responsible for any damage to the library's hardware, software or furniture.

Sunderland Public Library Internet workstations are to be used on a first-come, first-serve basis. Users are bound by time limits only if there are other patrons waiting to use the computers. In that case, there is a 15-minute time limit.

Although printouts are free, a .10 donation per page is suggested.

#### Violations:

The library staff reserves the right to terminate any Internet session at any time. Patrons violating this *Internet Safety Policy* may lose their Internet privileges and/or other library privileges as appropriate.