

# Thomas Memorial Library Policy Manual

## Computer Use and Internet Policy

### Purpose

The Thomas Memorial Library is pleased to provide public use computers, as well as a free public wireless network in order to ensure universal access to the internet. This policy exists in order to ensure the fair and reasonable use of library computers and internet resources. By accessing the internet using library network connections, or by accessing the internet inside library facilities using other public or private wireless networks, visitors agree to all terms and conditions expressed in this policy.

The internet and online environment consist of information on a wide range of topics, provided by millions of individuals and organizations around the world. Library visitors are advised to exercise judgement and discrimination when evaluating the usefulness and reliability of material found on the internet. Not all information available on the internet is accurate, complete, up-to-date, lawful, or philosophically acceptable to all individuals. The library has no control over the information found on the internet, and cannot be held responsible for its content.

The library assumes no responsibility and shall have no liability for any direct, indirect or consequential damages arising from providing computer and internet access to the public. In addition, visitors are responsible for:

- Any consequences that arise from unlawful or prohibited activities while using library equipment.
- Saving their own work on a mobile storage device such as a flash drive.
- Evaluating the accuracy of the material found on the internet.

### General Procedures

- The library provides internet access in two ways: public computer stations and an unsecured wireless network available to visitors with their own wireless devices. This policy applies to the use of each of these services.
- Computers are available from the time the library opens until 15 minutes before closing.
- Computers include USB ports for using flash drives. Visitors may bring their own flash drives to save their files. Files saved to a library computer's desktop are automatically deleted when the computer is restarted.
- Security measures have been taken to prevent the unintentional or intentional changing of operating system or software settings.
- Computer use is limited to 2 sessions of 60 minutes per day. Sessions may be extended by permission should the computers be available; if there is a queue for use, visitors will be expected to relinquish their computer when their time limit is reached.
- Should visitors wish to use sound on any computer or wireless device, headphones are required.

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- Black & white printing is available for a fee. The library does not offer color printing services.
- Limited scanning services are free; but library staff cannot assist with extensive scanning needs.
- All copying and scanning using library equipment must comply with copyright laws.
- Library staff's availability to help visitors with basic computer use is limited. Additionally, library staff may not have knowledge of all library computer programs, nor will they be familiar with how to use all websites. Library staff can assist as time and staffing permits, but visitors must have basic computer skills and are encouraged to attend one of the library's instructional technology programs to further their technology literacy skills.
- Basic word processing software is available on each public desktop computer. Staff can offer a visitor general help with word processing, but cannot help compose personal documents or research papers.

### Children (minors under the age of 13)

Children twelve (12) and under may use the computers on the upper level of the library while accompanied by an adult.

Because technology is so prevalent in contemporary society, and because our school system provides students with age-appropriate access to digital tools to develop digital literacy skills and to support academic needs, we feel less urgency in providing computer access to our youngest users. Instead, we strive to provide a rich variety of resources within our children's space that can be accessed without a screen. Through this policy on computer access for children at the library, we strive to foster an environment that prioritizes the psychosocial, physical, and mental well-being of our youngest patrons.

For additional resources on children's development and the use of technology, please refer to these studies:

\*American Academy of Pediatrics. (2022, July 20). Beyond screen time: Help your kids build healthy media use habits. HealthyChildren.org. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/healthy-digital-media-use-habits-for-babies-toddlers-preschoolers.aspx>

American Psychological Association. (n.d.). Screen time and emotional problems in kids: A vicious circle? American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2025/06/screen-time-problems-children>

Muppalla, S. K., Vuppalapati, S., Reddy Pulliahgaru, A., & Sreenivasulu, H. (2023, June 18). Effects of excessive screen time on Child development: An updated review and strategies for Management. Cureus. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10353947/#sec3>

Panjeti-Madan, V. N., & Ranganathan, P. (2023, May 16). Impact of screen time on children's development: Cognitive, language, physical, and social and emotional domains. MDPI. <https://www.mdpi.com/2414-4088/7/5/52>

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### Teens (minors 13 - 18 years old)

Teens may use the computers in the Adult Department, with the understanding that library employees do not assume the role of a parent or caregiver in determining what is and is not acceptable to view. Again, staff may intervene if a minor violates general policies or procedures.

### Conduct

The computer and internet resources offered by the library are to be used in accordance with principles of respect for other visitors of the network and equipment. Therefore, visitors may not:

- Attempt to access or tamper with settings or files on the hard disk by modifying, deleting or in any way altering them.
- Unplug, remove, or otherwise modify library equipment.
- Use software other than that provided and installed by the library.
- Make unauthorized entry into other networks or systems, or in any other way violate computer system security.
- Violate the privacy of others, harass other visitors, or send harassing or threatening messages
- Display sexually or violently graphic material on the computer screen; this is considered offensive behavior, and is a violation of Thomas Memorial Library's General Use Policy.
- Refuse to leave a computer after being suspended or asked to leave.
- Disrupt or obstruct the work of others.
- Use a cell phone for extended conversations while at the public computers.
- Play audio without headphones while at the public computers.
- Bring food or drink near the public computers or the public computing desks.

### Safety and Privacy

Library visitors are warned that the internet is not a secure medium and that privacy of email and other communications is not guaranteed. Though the library employs antivirus software, it cannot guarantee that its server or any website accessed by internet visitors is free of viruses or other harmful components. Visitors should assume that their information may not be private. The library is not liable for the loss or compromise of confidential or sensitive information or for any and all damages resulting from that loss or compromise.

It is solely the responsibility of the wireless device owner/visitor to provide antivirus protection, and to configure personal equipment with appropriate security settings to control access from other wireless devices within library facilities and the internet itself. Wireless visitors assume all risks in this regard.

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### Freedom of Access

The library adheres to the American Library Association's policy statement *Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the library Bill of Rights*, which supports the right of individuals to choose Library materials for themselves, including those in electronic formats. As such, the library does not monitor and has no control over or responsibility for the information accessed through the internet.

The library must balance the goal of supporting intellectual access with that of maintaining a welcoming environment. Unless a visitor is viewing material that is harmful or obscene, staff will not interfere with a visitor's right to privacy. Equally, in the case that a visitor's use of the internet, computers, and/or devices interferes with the ability of the library to provide a welcoming environment for the public, they may be asked to change their behavior.

### CIPA Filtering

Thomas Memorial Library provides internet access through our affiliation with the Maine School and Library Network (MSLN).

*To continue to receive funding for Internet access through the Federal E-rate program as administered by Network Maine for the Maine School and Library Network (MSLN) the library is required to: (a) prevent visitor access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].*

Key terms are as defined in the **Children's Internet Protection Act** (see Appendix B.)

### Access to Inappropriate Material

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or "internet filters") shall be used to block or filter Internet, or other forms of electronic communications, access to inappropriate information.

### Inappropriate Network Usage

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of visitors of the Thomas Memorial Library online computer network when using electronic mail, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by the **Children's Internet Protection Act**, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking,' and other

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unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

### Legality

Use of the library's internet and equipment for transmission, dissemination, and/or duplication of information is regulated under various state and federal laws. The library expects all visitors to comply with such laws, including but not limited to those related to copyright, computer hacking, and child pornography. Laws governing the use of the library's public internet computers and networks include, but are not limited to the following (see **Appendix B** complete text:)

- Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
- Computer Fraud and Abuse Act (CFAA)
- Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA)

### Violation

Violation of this policy or the library Use Guidelines Policy may result in suspension or revocation of library privileges. Use of the computers for illegal activity may also be subject to prosecution by the appropriate authorities.

**Adopted by TML Committee on:** April 29, 2021

**Adopted by Town Council Effective Date:** July 12, 2021

**Revised:** March, 2021; October, 2025

**Amended by TML Committee on:** October 23, 2025

**Amended by Town Council Effective Date:** November 10, 2025

**Review Schedule:** This policy shall be reviewed at least every 2 years