

Sara Hightower Regional Library System
Internet and Computer Use Policy

(Approved by SHRLS Board of Trustees 08/19/2021)

In response to advances in technology and the changing needs of the community, the Sara Hightower Regional Library System (SHRLS) endeavors to develop collections, resources, and services that meet the cultural, informational, recreational, and educational needs of Rome's diverse, multicultural community. It is within this context that the library offers access to the Internet. SHRLS supports patrons' informational, educational, and recreational interests by providing materials in a wide range of formats including free basic access to information via the Internet.

The Sara Hightower Regional Library System has no control over the information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. The Internet is a global entity with a highly diverse user population. Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete, or current information and library patrons use it at their own risk. SHRLS does not warrant or guarantee the reliability or truthfulness of information obtained from the Internet, and is not liable for direct, or indirect consequential damages related to the use of information accessed or transmitted via the Internet.

Parents or guardians, NOT the library or its staff, are responsible for the Internet information selected and accessed by their children. Parents are requested to supervise their children's Internet sessions.

All of our internet computers are (Child Internet Protection Act) CIPA compliant. Our internet provider blocks access to sites that contain visual depictions and information which may reasonably be construed as being obscene, child pornography, or materials "harmful to minors" as currently defined by law. Despite these provisions, patrons must assume responsibility for their own use of the Internet. Parents who are concerned about the contents of the Internet are strongly advised to closely supervise their children's use of this service and assist them in selecting sites that are appropriate for the age and understanding of their children.

Staff Assistance

Library staff cannot provide in-depth training concerning Internet computer jargon or personal computer use. Staff with Internet training may not always be available.

Email

SHRLS allows the general public access to email (electronic mail) through the use of the library's computer equipment and Internet connection. SHRLS does not endorse or promote any email provider. Staff will make reasonable efforts to answer email related questions, but cannot be expected to be knowledgeable about the variety of systems and accounts available. SHRLS is not responsible for providing users with email accounts or assisting users with personal accounts, and has no control over the content of messages a user receives. Any illegal email activity may be reported to the appropriate authorities.

WI-FI

- SHRLS provides free wireless/wired Internet access for library visitors to use with their own personal devices. The following apply to users of the wireless/wired service in the library:
- All wireless/wired users are individually responsible for maintaining up-to-date virus protection on personal laptop computers or wireless/wired devices.
- Personal wireless/wired network use is “as is” and “as available.” Random loss of signal is not preventable. SHRLS is not responsible for loss of personal data or damage to personal equipment due to loss of wireless/wired signal.
- SHRLS is not responsible for theft of or damage to personal equipment brought into the library.
- Users are responsible for configuring their own equipment. The library does not provide technical support for establishing or maintaining a connection nor equipment configurations. SHRLS is not responsible for any changes made to an individual computer’s settings and does not guarantee that a user’s hardware will work with the library’s wireless/wired connection.

Disclaimer

Our library staff cannot monitor or control information available on the Internet and is not responsible for its quality, accuracy or content. Users access to the Internet and the information and services available on it is their own risk. Our staff is not trained to offer more than basic computer assistance, but every effort will be made to assist an individual user in finding suitable information or appropriate Internet sites. Library staff will work to ensure that fair and reasonable access to the Internet is available to all users. However, SHRLS reserves the right to terminate a session that is disruptive to Library service. All users are expected to use this resource in a responsible, courteous manner, and observe rules and procedures for Internet and computer use. SHRLS supports a user’s right to privacy within the limits of conducting activities in a public building and as permissible by law. Because Internet security can be technically difficult to achieve or guarantee, a user should be aware that electronic communications and files could become public. SHRLS will not be responsible for any personal information a user willingly posts or transmits. Users may bring their own laptop or other electronic equipment for use in the library, with the understanding that they will follow the guidelines in this policy. SHRLS will not be responsible for damage or theft of personal equipment.

Internet Use Guidelines

- Internet computers are available:
 - 8:00 a.m. – 8:15 p.m. Monday through Thursday
 - 10:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. Saturday
- Use of the Internet computers is on a first come, first served basis. If someone is waiting, use will be limited to 30 minutes.
- You may use an Internet email provider (such as google.com) to access email within the library.
- You may not use your own software programs on the Internet computers.
- You must pay for all copies you make, even those made accidentally. Prices for copies vary by branch. Please ask a library staff member for prices before printing.
- You may not be able to access all sites on the Internet that you want to visit. Some explanations follow:
 - There are too many Internet users and the host computer closes access until some users logoff.
 - The database or resource is licensed to authorized users only.
 - The host computer has changed its address or closed down.
 - The library's Internet connection may be having technical difficulties.
- Users must end their session and leave the computers when asked to do so by authorized library staff.
- Users shall respect the privacy of other users and shall refrain from attempting to view or read material being used by others, as well as to censor or comment on what others are viewing.
- The first misuse of the computer or Internet access will result in loss of your Internet privileges:
 - First offense 1 week
 - Second offense 1 month
 - Third offense 1 calendar year
 - Fourth offense Permanent

- Misuse of Internet or Computers include (but not limited to):
 - Using or viewing profanity, obscenity or language which may be offensive to another user.
 - Copying commercial content in violation of copyright laws.
 - Using Internet computers for any illegal activity.
 - Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt the system's performance.
 - Destruction of or damage to equipment, software or data belonging to the Library or other users.
 - Disruption or unauthorized monitoring of electronic communication.
 - Transmitting and/or receiving obscene materials and/or child pornography is a violation of law and is not permitted under any circumstances. Violation of this rule will subject a patron to criminal prosecution and result in immediate and permanent loss of library Internet access privileges.
 - Minors, whether or not accompanied by a parent or guardian, shall not use computers for any illegal activity, or to access illegal materials, child pornography, obscene materials, or materials "harmful to minors" as currently defined by law. Violations of this rule may subject a patron to criminal prosecution and will result in immediate loss of library Internet access privileges.
 - Violation of software license agreements.
 - Disruptive behavior at any computer workstation by individuals or groups.
 - Refusing to pay for any copies initiated from the Internet workstation you are using.

Right of Appeal

An Internet user whose access session has been terminated or whose Internet access has been prohibited shall have the right to appeal and/or request that Internet access privileges be reinstated. An appeal must be in writing and submitted to the Library Director within five days of the termination or prohibition. Within ten days of receipt of the appeal, the Library Director shall review the matter and notify the patron in writing of his/her decision. If the Library Director's decision is adverse to the patron, the patron may appeal in writing within five days to the Library's Board of Trustees, which shall thereafter consider the matter and issue its decision in writing within 30 days of receipt. No further appeals shall be considered. Temporary or permanent denial of Internet privileges at any Library System facility will be effective at all Library System facilities.

Definitions:

1. "Minor" is a person under 18 years of age. O.C.G.A. 16-12-102(3)
 2. "Harmful to minors" is defined as per current Georgia law, O.C.G.A. 16-12-102.
 3. "Inappropriate matter" for minors is material that is obscene as defined under Georgia law (O.C.G.A. 16-12-80), child pornography as defined under federal and/or state law (18 U.S.C. 2256; O.C.G.A. 16-12-100), and material that is "harmful to minors" as defined in Georgia law (O.C.G.A. 16-12-102).
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WARNINGS:

1. Although the library uses a virus-protection on computers, this will not completely protect you from the chance of getting a virus. Software downloaded from the Internet may contain a virus. You need to have virus-protection software on your computer. The Sara Hightower Regional Library is not responsible for damage to a patron's external storage device or computer, or for any loss of data, damage, or liability that may occur from patron use of the library's computers.
2. Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete, or current information. You need to be a good information consumer, questioning validity or the information you find.
3. "Guidelines for Online Safety of Minors" is found in attachment A.
4. Detailed procedure for reconsideration of Internet use and the Reconsideration Form are found in attachment B

Attachment A

Guidelines for Online Safety of Minors

In an effort to protect the safety and security of minors when using email, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communications, we ask that minors agree to the following:

I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parents' work address/telephone number, or the name and location of my school without my parents' permission.

I will tell the Library Staff right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.

I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother or father along.

I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents.

I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do, I will tell my parents right away so that they can contact the online service.

I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules.

For further information on child safety, please call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

Attachment B

PROCEDURE FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INTERNET USE

The Library will reconsider any written request from a patron regarding Internet use. The request procedure is as follows:

1. The staff member receiving the complaint will prepare a written statement detailing the interchange with the patron. The written statement and the completed patron's form will be given to the Library Director within five (5) working days.
2. The Library Director or designee will investigate and a written report of the findings will be available within ten (10) working days.
3. After careful consideration, the Library Director will notify the complainant of the recommended action.
4. The complainant will be given the opportunity to appeal the recommendation of the library to the Board of Trustees. The complainant will be notified of this option in writing at the time the library's recommendation is sent to said complainant.
5. THE DECISION OF THE BOARD WILL BE FINAL.

RECONSIDERATION FORM FOR LOST PRIVILEGES TO USE INTERNET

PATRON'S NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

DATE INCIDENT OCCURRED: _____

INTERNET WEBSITE IN QUESTION: _____

COMPLAINT:

Signature:

Date:



