Policy Type:	Operational	Policy Number: **OP – 14**
Policy Title:	**Internet and Computer Use Policy**	_ARM_
Previous versions:	Internet Acceptable Use, Sept. 2012 & earlier, Jun23, 2016; Jun24, 2021	
Last review/revision date: July 26, 2021		Next review due: 2025

OP – 14 Internet and Computer Use Policy

Purpose:

To define expectations and responsibilities related to the provision by the Hanover Public Library (the library) of internet access as a free public service, and of computer equipment for public use. It outlines library services provided, user responsibilities, library staff responsibilities, and consequences of inappropriate behaviour or illegal activity.

Scope:

This policy applies to, and defines the responsibilities of, library staff and people using the library internet service whether inside or outside the library, people using their own devices, people using computer equipment provided by the library, and people accessing the internet by any other means within the library.

Policy Statement:

The library recognizes the internet's value as a resource for information, learning, communication, entertainment, inspiration and discovery.

The library endorses the use of the internet as an essential source of information to complement traditional library collections. It serves as a channel to connect people with the library, its services, and resources.

The library provides resources to encourage and empower people in our community learning to use this technology effectively.

The library intends to provide computer and internet resources fairly and equally to all library users.

The library strives to provide a safe, inclusive space for our community.

Policy Guidelines:

The library provides free public internet access for everyone to use, including library members and visitors.

Free wireless internet access is available. There is no time limit or registration required for use of the wireless network.

The library also provides computers with internet connections for public use. Sessions are limited and users are required to provide their library card number as part of the sign in process. Visitors may be provided with a guest pass to access the library's computers.

Users are advised that the library cannot control or monitor material available on the internet. The library recognizes that in addition to the many valuable resources available

on the internet, some resources are illegal, misleading or inaccurate. Others may be considered by some people to be offensive, objectionable or intimidating.

The library's public network is open and unsecured. The library does not assume responsibility or liability for any direct or indirect damages resulting from use of the library's computers, connecting to the library's public network or using the internet. Users choosing to use these services are advised to protect their devices, settings, data and passwords, as well as take steps to avoid exposure to spyware, viruses and other harmful software and breaches of privacy.

In particular, when using the wireless network, the library recommends that personal data such as credit card details, online banking information and passwords should not be transmitted.

Internet access computers are situated in a public area shared by people of all ages and sensibilities. Users are encouraged to be respectful of the rights and sensibilities of others.

Available power outlets may be used in designated areas where a device's power cord will not present a tripping hazard or block access for library staff or users. It is recommended that users charge their battery before coming to the library.

Responsibilities:

Library Responsibilities
The library will facilitate and promote public access to information for all users so that the community may benefit from the use of the internet. The library will proactively promote user education, media awareness and internet safety.

The library will continuously develop the technological skills and awareness of library staff to provide up-to-date general support to users.

The library will respect the right of users to privacy and confidentiality with regards to resources consulted, acquired or transmitted and information sought or received. In respect of the range of sensibilities and viewpoints of our community, the library will endeavour to minimize the opportunity for unintentional exposure by people using the library to content being accessed by another library user.

The library will support the right and responsibility of parents or guardians to guide, monitor and determine their children's use of library services.

The library will assume responsibility for the information provided on its own web pages. However, the library is not responsible for content linked to its website. Links to information resources do not imply endorsement.

The library will strive to provide reliable services, but internet access cannot be guaranteed. The library shall assume no liability due to internet access being unavailable.

The library will endeavour to provide equitable access and service to all. If required, the library may apply user bandwidth restrictions to maintain service performance.

The library will maintain and protect equipment and resources from neglect and misuse and reserves the right to withdraw access to computers or the network if necessary.

Staff Responsibilities

Library staff act as intermediaries between users and internet resources and are essential to the provision of relevant, accessible, equitable and high-quality library services.

Library staff will not monitor, censor or restrict access to the internet, in accordance with the library's policy titled *Intellectual Freedom* (FN-04).

Library staff will support users in the responsible use of the library's internet service.

Library staff will assist users within reasonable limits. They will provide help accessing programs and the internet on library equipment and using library-provided online resources. General knowledge level help and research into using well-known features will be provided.

Library staff will provide basic instructions on how to connect to the wireless network but cannot provide technical assistance. No guarantee can be made that users will be able to make a connection.

Library staff will not alter settings, install software or attempt technical troubleshooting or repairs on a user's own equipment. Library staff may refer users to library services offering learning assistance by appointment or provide a list of local technical support businesses.

Library staff are entrusted with the obligation to ensure that all rules of computer use, and internet acceptable use guidelines are followed. Library staff will advise users of appropriate conduct as required and state consequences of not following the rules of conduct should unacceptable behaviour continue or be repeated.

Library staff are authorized to ask individuals to terminate access to an internet site or use of a device if content and images are disturbing others or violate this policy or the library's *Code of Conduct Policy.*

User Responsibilities

All users are guests on the system and should act with respect and consideration for one another.

Users are expected to act in a manner that will not disturb or interfere with other library users. Everyone, including people using the library's internet services, is responsible for following the library's *Code of Conduct Policy* which is designed to provide a welcoming and safe environment for the enjoyment of the public and library staff.

Users must respect library resources. Users must not tamper with computers, printers and other devices owned by the library or other users. This includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

- using encryption keys or locking mechanisms on the computers;
- installing any software programs;

- subverting or attempting to subvert any security devices in either software or hardware format which the library has installed;
- installing or attempting to install viruses or other programs designed to damage or alter software on the library's computers and other devices, the local area network or the internet, or seeking unauthorized access to any computer system;
- sending unsolicited commercial material or spamming;
- deleting or altering system files or programs.

Users must respect other people's property and privacy, and make no attempt to gain access to or modify files, passwords or data belonging to others.

Users should take responsibility for determining what material they wish to access and assessing for themselves the accuracy, currency, reliability and legality of the information.

Users must refrain from viewing pornographic or sexually explicit content (websites, files, text, graphics, etc.). Users are responsible for the content and images they choose to view on the internet and should be considerate of others who may be involuntarily exposed to what is displayed.

Users must abide by municipal, provincial and federal laws including, but not limited to, those that prohibit obscenity, child pornography, harassment, bullying, the incitement of hate, fraud, or distribution of spam, viruses and malware. Each user is personally and legally responsible for their actions while using the library's internet services.

Users should be conscious of and comply with copyright, intellectual property and software license requirements.

Users may be held responsible for any virus they introduce to the system.

Users should plan their time responsibly, and must be ready to save their work and end their session promptly when required or before the library closes.

Users cannot hold the library responsible for any loss of data.

Intellectual Freedom:

Users have the fundamental right to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity. However, the library uses filtering technology to prevent inadvertent access to websites with content that is illegal or inconsistent with this policy and the library's *Code of Conduct Policy.*

The library's filtering software does not monitor electronic communication, including email and chat rooms.

The library recognizes that filtering software is not perfect. Users may report the addresses of sites that are not appropriately filtered to library staff.

The library supports and endorses the principles expressed in its policy titled *Intellectual Freedom.* In accordance with the principle of access to all expressions of knowledge, users may request access to legal filtered sites. Within reason and as library staff resources and library technology allow, access to requested content will be provided.

Privacy:

Privacy of users is not guaranteed. Users are encouraged to make every possible effort to safeguard their personal, confidential or business information transmitted via the internet using the library's computers or wireless network.

Library computers are equipped with a "clean slate" program that will erase daily, all record of session activity, and any saved files. Users are encouraged to delete their browsing history and temporary internet files at the end of each session so their personal information is not accessible by any subsequent users.

General usage statistics are compiled by library staff, including numbers of people using the library's internet facilities and length of time used. The library will not keep records that can identify internet users or their usage data for longer than required to compile service statistics.

Internet Use by Children:

For the purpose of this section:
parent or *guardian* means a person who is directly responsible for the care, well-being, safety and supervision of their child or teen (in the case of a parent) or of a child or teen who is their ward (in the case of a guardian);
caregiver means a person assigned by the parent or guardian of a child to be responsible for the child's care, well-being, safety and supervision. Such a person could include, but is not limited to, the child's teacher or tutor.

The library supports the right and responsibility of parents and guardians to determine, monitor and guide their children's use of library services and resources, including the use of the internet. The library does not act in place, or in the absence, of a parent, guardian or caregiver.

Library staff will not monitor, censor or restrict access to the internet, in accordance with the library's policy titled *Intellectual Freedom* (FN-04); however, library staff will provide support for children and adults in safe use of the internet.

Parents, guardians and caregivers are encouraged to supervise and participate in their children's internet use and to inform their children if there are resources they do not want their children to access. There is always a risk of unintentional exposure of children and teens to internet content that may not be age appropriate.

While the library has filtering software to block some content, it is not designed for use by children. The library assumes no liability in the event that a user reaches a site assumed to be filtered. The library is not responsible for children's use of internet resources accessed via the library's computers, our network or other people's devices.

Responsibility for the welfare and behaviour of children using the library ultimately rests with the respective parents, guardians or caregivers. Library staff cannot supervise children nor act as substitute caregivers. Library staff, when necessary, will be guided by and apply the library's *Unattended Children Policy* (OP-13).

Consequences of Misuse:

The library will act on any inappropriate behaviour related to the use of the library's internet service, such as intimidation, harassment, bullying, etc., in accordance with the library's *Code of Conduct Policy.*

The library will act against unlawful activity, may contact the police and will cooperate in any lawful investigation of criminal activity. Complaints that a user is accessing legally prohibited material may also result in the library contacting the police.

Any person violating library rules for the use of the library's internet service or other wireless services in the library risks suspension of library privileges, exclusion from the library for a period of time and banning or prosecution (or both).

Related Documents:
Hanover Public Library. *FN-04 - Intellectual Freedom*
Hanover Public Library. *OP-02 - Code of Conduct Policy*
Hanover Public Library. *OP-13 - Unattended Children Policy*