**Internet and Computer Use Policy (revised for COVID-19 considerations)**

The Elsa Public Library, as part of its mission to provide access to educational and informational resources, has public Internet workstations and wireless Internet service available in Adult and Children’s areas. Consistent with the Library's mission and with professional principles of public librarianship, this Internet Use Policy affirms the safeguarding of First Amendment rights, intellectual freedom, and equity of access, confidentiality of information about users and their use of information resources. All users are expected to comply with the guidelines in this policy and use electronic resources in the same responsible and courteous manner that is expected for all Library materials and services. Abuse or misuse of any Library materials is prohibited by City of Elsa Library Ordinance No. 2021-4-20 Section 4 Rules Defacing Library Property.

Public Internet computers are principally for use by Elsa residents with a valid Elsa Public Library card. Courtesy use of Library computers is extended to valid cardholders from other HCLS member libraries. Likewise, out-of-town visitors may request a guest pass to use Internet computers if no Elsa residents are waiting. They are also expected to abide by all rules and regulations in this policy. Due to social distancing requirements, Library staff are unable to provide help at the computer stations.

​The Library Internet computers have software installed that will log a user on for a set time period. Current time limits are set for a defined amount of time per user per day. Time extensions will not be granted even if computers are available. Only under extenuating circumstances may a user receive extra time and will only be granted at the discretion of the supervisor on duty.

​Guests and out-of-town users are limited to one guest pass per day as outlined below. Guest users without a Library card may be asked to show a driver’s license or some other form of identification. Users are expected to work independently and have basic knowledge of computer and Internet use. Staff may assist users for specific questions at the Reference Desk, but are not trained to provide extended or in-depth support. At certain busy times, users may be asked to wait for help.

Subject to demand, computer use may be restricted to one 30-minute session per day per card holder. Appointments may be required at the discretion of the library staff.

Priority will be provided to Elsa Public Library Card holders.

Each guest pass user will be entitled to one 30-minute pass per day. Appointments may be required at the discretion of the library staff.

There is a workstation in the Adult area dedicated to searching the Library catalog only.

​Those using the computer are only permitted to use one valid Library Card. Patrons may not add extra time by logging in with another person’s Library Card after exhausting time on their own card. In addition, a user may not request a guest pass after exhausting the time on their Library Card.

​ **(Temporarily not available) USE OF COMPUTERS BY MINOR CHILDREN**

The Texas Library Association affirms the right of all users to have unrestricted access to the Internet and acknowledges the right of parents to determine the level of Internet access for their minor children. Parents or caregivers of minor children are expected to supervise their child's Internet sessions. Internet computers in the Children’s Room are solely for use of children up to and including Grade 5. Children under age nine (9) must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver throughout the Library. Parents or guardians are solely responsible for what their children access via the Internet. As stated above, not all filtering software are 100% protected. Parents are cautioned that unsupervised children may see things that the parent finds objectionable. Children should be accompanied by a parent or caregiver or should be provided with parental guidelines for Internet use. The Library staff cannot be responsible for determining what is acceptable for children, but may intervene if a child violates general policies or procedures. Children in Grades 6 through Grade 12 may use the Internet 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 child violates general policies or procedures.

Federal law has been implemented to provide a Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) which mandates filtering on all library Internet terminals. This filter is site specific and does not block research sites or information. If you believe access is unjustly denied, please contact the Library Director. An additional component of CIPA, which parents will want to be aware of, is that minors are not permitted to disclose any personal information when using e-mail, visiting chat rooms or using any other electronic communications.

To comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act [Pub, L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254 (h)], it is required policy of the Elsa Public Library to: Restrict access of inappropriate matter or materials that are harmful to minors. Provide user safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Prevent unauthorized access, and other unlawful online activity; and Prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors.

No filtering software product on the market today is 100% effective in blocking every sexually explicit Internet site since new ones are added every day from all over the world. The Library cannot guarantee that sexually explicit material will not get past the filter or that there will not be other sites to which another patron or a parent might object.

**EMAIL**

The Library allows the general public access to e-mail (electronic mail) through the use of the Library's computer equipment and Internet connection. The Library does not endorse or promote any e-mail provider. Staff will make reasonable efforts to answer e-mail related questions, but cannot be expected to be knowledgeable about the variety of systems and accounts available. The Library is not responsible for providing users with e-mail accounts or assisting users with personal accounts. The Library has no control over the content of messages a user receives. Any illegal e-mail activity may be reported to the appropriate authorities in accordance with the computer use policy. All policies governing acceptable use of Internet sites shall apply to e-mail. Because Internet sites are often part of e-mail messages, users may access those sites, provided they comply with the general Internet use policy established by the Library. Parents of minors shall be responsible for their child's activities and e-mail access. Printing of e-mail messages will be charged at 10 cents per page for black and white, color page price will be determined at the front desk by staff.

**LICENSED DATABASES**

A wide variety of subscription and research databases, including those with full-text of magazine and newspaper articles, are available for public use free of charge. Library staff will do their best to guide users to the most useful sites or databases, but cannot guarantee that requested information is available or can be accessed without cost to the user.

Some databases are available for remote use outside of the Library to users with a valid borrower’s card. As with all information on the Internet, the Library cannot guarantee accuracy of information of subscription databases or research sites accessed remotely. Print-outs from databases, research sites or other sources will be charged at 10 cents per page for black and white and color page price will be determined at the front desk by staff.

​**OFFENSIVE OR ILLEGAL MATERIAL**

Internet computers are located in public places shared by people of all ages, backgrounds and sensibilities. Users are asked to keep this in mind when accessing potentially controversial material which could be offensive, disturbing, unsuited to a public setting and/or illegal. Library staff may end an Internet session when such materials display on the screen. Although constant monitoring is not possible, the Library staff reserves the right to request that a user exit a website if another user expresses concern or if the staff member judges the material to be inappropriate for public viewing. Since workstations are located in public areas, the Library staff is confident that individuals will use sound judgment as to what is acceptable to fellow community members. Individuals who become argumentative or refuse to log-off when asked to do so by a Library employee, will have their session ended and may be asked to leave the building. Violators of the computer use policy may lose Library privileges. Illegal acts involving Library workstations may also be subject to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities.

**DISCLAIMER**

The Library cannot monitor or control information available on the Internet and is not responsible for its quality, accuracy or content. Users access the Internet and the information and services available on it at their own risk. The Library 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, the Library reserves the right for staff 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.

The Library 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. The Library 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. The Library will not be responsible for damage or theft of personal equipment. Electric outlets are located in many areas, but will be used at an owner own risk.

**USER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Patrons utilizing the Internet computers to play games, send emails, use social networking sites or chat rooms may be asked by the Library staff to end their session if another patron needs to conduct research and no other computers are available. The search for materials and information takes precedence over all other activities. Any problems with the computers should be immediately reported to a Library staff member. A user is not permitted, under any circumstances, to tamper with or modify the equipment or software. Any damage to hardware or software will be the liability of the user, and will be repaired at their expense. Two (2) persons may work together at a single computer station ONLY if it does not disturb those working at stations next to them. Users should respect the privacy of others and should not interfere with searches, nor should anyone attempt to gain access to passwords, data, or files belonging to others. Data, files, programs or other material may be temporarily downloaded and will be erased from the hard drive when a user exits the session. Users may transfer information to flash drives or e-mail information. Printing is currently available at a cost of 10 cents for every black and white page printed, color page price will be determined at the front desk by staff. Basic word processing software is available on each public desktop computer. Staff can offer a user general help with word processing, but cannot help compose personal documents or research papers. All computer use shall cease at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the closing of the Library. Scheduling software will automatically shut down computers. The Library does not maintain any record of individuals using the Internet, but may keep a record of users who violate the Internet Use Policy.

The Library reserves the right to modify the policies as necessary to ensure the fair and reasonable use of the Internet.

​ Adopted by the City of Elsa Council, October, 1996, Revised

Users may not:

Install, delete or modify library hardware or software

Move or change the arrangement of the library computers and peripherals

Store software/data from the Internet onto the computers

Make any attempt to damage computer equipment or software

Make any attempt to cause degradation of system performance

Misuse library computers or other equipment/resources

Share computer workstations with others