In fulfilling our mission of "Preserving our history, building community, and nurturing the life of the mind," the Lewiston Public Library endeavors to develop quality collections, resources, and services for use by the citizens of Lewiston. The information, services and resources available over the Internet comprise a means for cultural exploration and a valuable learning tool for our community. They allow any individual the opportunity to explore a wealth of information well beyond the walls of the Library proper. It is imperative that the Library continue to develop Internet services along with its more traditional library and information services. These Internet services shall include both in-library services designed to provide users with online access to the Internet and web-based services for delivering information, services, and resources to clients via the Library's web pages.

The Library staff shall develop a familiarity with Internet resources, search engines, and other navigating tools and use this knowledge to assist library users in locating information to meet their needs. However, the Internet is vast and rapidly expanding, therefore library users should recognize that any one person can provide only limited assistance.

The Library shall maintain a set of publicly-accessible web pages on the Internet for the purposes of: 1.) providing information on Library services, policies, collections, and programs; 2.) facilitating citizen communication with the Library staff; and 3.) directing users to quality information and resources available at other Internet sites. The Library staff shall identify first-quality, commercial information resources available on the Internet and purchase community-wide access to these resources for all Library cardholders. Whenever possible, the staff should explore cost-effective options for obtaining this access by working cooperatively with other libraries and through statewide consortia.

The Library shall provide computers for use by the public to access the Internet. The library staff shall set rules and restrictions on the use of these computers to ensure that the resources are shared freely and equally.

All Library records regarding a patron's use of the Internet shall be kept confidential. Those records may only be released with the express written permission of the patron involved or per order of a court.

Misuse of the electronic resources of the Library, or of Internet access, shall result in the loss of computer privileges for the user. Such misuse includes, but is not limited to, using computers for illegal activities; viewing obscene or sexually explicit images; hacking into the Library's computer system or any other computer system; sending harassing communications to other computer users; and violating copyright laws and/or software licensing agreements.

The Lewiston Public Library 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. While much of the information available is of a high quality, the Internet also contains information that is inaccurate, outdated, or personally offensive.   The

availability of information does not constitute endorsement of the content by the Lewiston Public Library and library patrons should use it at their own risk. Access, use, or dissemination of information via the Internet in the Library is the responsibility of the user. In the case of minors, it is a joint responsibility of the user and the parent or guardian.

The public library, unlike schools, does not serve *in loco parentis* (in place of a parent). Librarians cannot act in the place of parents in providing constant care and supervision of children as they explore the Internet. The responsibility for what minors read or view on the Internet rests with parents or guardians. Also, parents or guardians set family standards and values; for that reason, the Library highly recommends that parents or guardians assist and accompany their children's exploration and research on the Internet.

The following are recommended guidelines for parents and guardians to ensure that minors have positive online experiences, whether at home or in the library:

- Use the Internet as a family. Join your children in Internet exploration.
- Explore the wide range of available information and tell your children about sites you consider inappropriate for them.
- Encourage children to use sites recommended on the Library's web pages and counsel them to avoid sites you consider unsuitable.
- Provide guidelines for your children on the amount of time they spend online, just as for television viewing.
- Instruct children NEVER to give out personal information (name, address, password, telephone number, credit card number, etc.) online and NEVER to arrange to meet someone whom they have communicated with online.
- Teach children to be good online information consumers. As with print information, consider the source, date, and accuracy.

With the exception of the Internet computers in the Children's Room, the Library will not place filtering or blocking software on its public internet computers. The state of filtering software technology is far from perfect, allowing inappropriate material to pass through and blocking appropriate sites from view. The Library has a First Amendment responsibility to provide access to legally-protected free speech. Filtering software will be used on the Children's Room computers only in an attempt to block information and images that are obscene or harmful to minors.

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