

## PUBLIC COMPUTER USE POLICY

Item A-SR (01-2006) CM 29/06/2006	LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES: PROPOSED PUBLIC COMPUTER USE POLICY
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### RESOLVED:

1. **That** the report regarding the proposed Public Computer Use Policy pertaining to Ekurhuleni Library and Information Services **BE NOTED**.

2. **That** the Public Computer Use Policy pertaining to Ekurhuleni Library and Information Services, attached as **Annexure "A"** to the report, **BE APPROVED**.

3. **That** the Tariffs for Libraries and Information Services **BE AMENDED** and the amendments **BE PROMULGATED** in terms of section 75A of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000, with effect from 01 August 2006, by amending section 3.7 (Electronic Searches) to provide for the free use of the Internet.

4. **That** the Executive Director: Corporate and Legal Services **COMPLY** with section 75A of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000.

## Annexure "A"

**EKURHULENI METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY  
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES  
PUBLIC COMPUTER USE POLICY****1 Background**

The Ekurhuleni Library and Information Services (LIS) are committed to intellectual freedom. It provides educational, informational and recreational media and services, promotes lifelong learning and contributes to the cognitive development of the Ekurhuleni community. The services and resources are available to all residents irrespective of education, economic background or age, allowing all to participate equally.

LIS strives to develop collections that will provide access to a broad range of information resources in a variety of formats including electronic media, the Internet and other emerging formats. LIS expands its information services beyond traditional collections and resources.

**2 Purpose**

This policy clarifies what is considered as acceptable use of and access to the computer technology available at Ekurhuleni libraries. LIS maintains the right to enforce policies, rules and procedures for the orderly and effective use of its electronic resources, including stand-alone Public Computer Systems, computer networks and dedicated Internet access terminals subject to Council Information Technology (ICT) Policy.

**3 Definition of a Public Computer System**

A Public Computer System is a computer system that is made available to library patrons to inter alia:

- Process documents
- Do research
- Send e-mail (only free e-mail on the Internet)
- Print
- Navigate the Internet

**4 Legal and ethical use**

Use of the Public Computer System shall be consistent with the Council ICT and LIS Public Computer Use and other relevant policies and procedures as well as with local, provincial and national statutes. It is expected that users of these Public Computer Systems shall not interfere with the system's operation, integrity or security.

The policies reflect the ICT ethics and the principles of the Council and LIS.

Violation of any laws or regulations may result in loss of privileges or possible civil or criminal penalties as and when applicable.

#### **4.1 Copyright**

Users may not copy, save, or redistribute any copyright or other protected material. Users should assume that all material (software) is copyrighted unless explicitly noted to the contrary.

#### **4.2 Privacy and Confidentiality**

LIS is sensitive to the need of users to access information, or use resources, in privacy. However, LIS cannot guarantee a user's privacy.

#### **4.3 Down loading from commercial data bases**

Some commercial databases on the Internet require a fee. These fees are the responsibility of the user; they are not the responsibility of the library.

#### **4.4 Children's use of the Internet**

For users under the age of 18 years, a parent/guardian must agree to abide by the LIS Public Computer Use Agreement by authorising the minor child's Public Computer Use application form \* see also User Eligibility (par 6).

It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to determine whether to allow exposure of children to the use of the Internet. The Internet and World Wide Web's user friendliness and intrinsic flexibility to access a wide range of information resources demand serious selection considerations by parents/guardians. LIS restricts minors' access to harmful materials by placing filtering software on computer stations. However, software filters are not 100% effective.

It should be understood that LIS and its staff can not act as censors or substitute the parent/guardian. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to accompany the child and to provide the necessary supervision to ensure their children's use of the Internet in an appropriate and safe manner.

#### **4.5 Disclaimer: Limitation of Liability**

LIS does not guarantee the quality or correctness of information available on the Internet.

LIS is not responsible for any violation of copyright or software licensing agreements.

Librarians will not censor access to material or protect users from offensive information.

LIS cannot guarantee the confidentiality of personal and credit card information transmitted over the Internet.

Council will take no responsibility if users misrepresent themselves. Parents should advise their children not to make their computer use card available to others.

## **5. Tariffs**

### **5.1 Internet Public Computer System**

Internet navigating/searches are provided free of charge.

### **5.2 Diskettes (stiffies)**

New diskettes will be available for purchase at libraries at a cost determined by Council. At no time may any user files be saved to the hard drive of the computer. If required these diskettes will be kept at the library for future use by the user.

### **5.3 Printing**

LIS will supply the paper for printing. Users may not use their own paper. Data may be printed at a cost determined by Council.

## **6. User eligibility**

Before computers may be used:

- User must sign the applicable Public Computer Use Agreement acknowledging that he/she has read and agrees to abide by the rules, terms and provisions set forth in this policy, upon which a LIS PC use registration card will be issued to him/her.
- Parent/guardian must sign the abovementioned agreement before access to a minor can be granted to the Public Computer System. There are no exceptions to this policy.
- User must provide his/her own valid LIS PC use registration card to the librarian on duty every time access is required, complete and sign the appropriate register and identify the computer that will be used.

## **7. Staff assistance**

Basic instruction on Public Computer Systems/Internet access and navigating suggestions will be available from trained library staff when possible. It is preferable that users have basic computer skills.

Staff will devote a reasonable amount of time assisting individual library users with the Internet where needed. They will not be expected to assist persons in navigating/searching on the Internet.

## **8. Equal opportunity / reservations / scheduling time for computer use**

### **8.1 Reservations**

No reservations for Public Computer System access will be made. Use of the system will be on a first-come first-serve basis.

### **8.2 Scheduling**

The demand for use of the LIS Public Computer System may exceed the available supply. Therefore it is necessary to manage access to the system fairly and equitably.

Sign-up duration may vary. If someone is waiting to use a terminal, use will be limited to 30 minutes. Should a workstation be available past the sign-up limit (with no one waiting) the user may continue to use the workstation until another patron signs in to use the workstation. The user will then immediately cease computer activity to relinquish the workstation. Duration limits also apply to all individuals sharing a workstation during a session.

### **8.3 Operational hours**

Operational hours are from the time that the library opens for the public until closure. Library hours may vary from one library service point to another.

Occasionally the computers may be shut down for repairs or maintenance; therefore LIS does not guarantee that the computers will be available when the library is open. Any computer and computer system is subject to down time and the library shall not be liable for any direct or indirect incidental or consequential damages (including the loss of data or profits) sustained or incurred in connection with the use, operations or inability to use the Public Computer System.

## **9. Internet public access limitations**

Patrons may not always be able to access the sites on the Internet that they wish to access. The following may be some reasons for this:

- a) there are too many Internet visitors and the host computer has closed or limited access.
- b) the resource is licensed to a particular institution.
- c) the host computer has changed its address or has closed down.
- d) the library's Internet connection may be periodically and temporarily inoperable due to technical difficulties or other reasons.

## 91 Chat rooms and Gaming

Internet Relay Chat and multi-user dungeons are not available to the user via the LIS Internet Computer Systems. No patron will be allowed to participate in any form of multi-user online games.

Suitable educational games will be made available.

### 9.2 E-mail

LIS is not an Internet Service Provider and therefore does not issue individual e-mail accounts or subscriptions, however, many web sites offer free web-based e-mail.

The Internet Computer Systems may be used to set-up and access this type of account. Library staff is not able to assist with setting up these accounts, or with uploading or downloading of e-mail attachments.

LIS does not offer technical support for any free web-based e-mail accounts. If a patron experiences problems with an account, it must be resolved with the company providing the service.

## 10. Enforcements/Sanctions

- Usage of the LIS electronic services is subject to specific conditions.
- Violation of this policy may result in loss or suspension of computer privileges and/or loss of access to the Internet without prior notice or hearing.
- The Controlling Librarian will determine what constitutes a violation of the library's "Acceptable Use Policy"; provided that the user may appeal to the Director: LIS.
- The controlling librarian or delegated staff member has the right to cancel or interrupt use by any person who abuses equipment or software or refuses to adhere to this policy.
- LIS staff does reserve the right to ask a patron not to access a site that displays material that may be offensive to other library users.

### 10.1 Public computer system regulations

Patrons may not:

- a) Store any files on the library's computers but should use only diskettes which are obtainable from library counters at a fee determined by Council.
- b) Use own diskettes or any other removable storing device.
- c) Install or download any software or data on any computer.
- d) Misuse library computers, software or related equipment in any way.

- e) Erase or alter any library-stored data or programming on the hard drive.
- f) Make changes, additions, deletions or alter any data, files or software.
- g) Make unauthorized changes in configuration of computer hardware or software.
- h) Destroy data by spreading computer worms and/or viruses or by any other means.
- i) Create a disturbance to the effective use of the library by others. Such persons will be requested to correct their behaviour, disband, and/or leave the building, as appropriate.
- j) Use the LIS Public Computer System for illegal activities on the Internet such as to commit fraud, unwanted advertising or other crimes.
- k) Attempt to gain unauthorized access to other computers, information or communication devices or resources. Patrons may not use unauthorized computer accounts, access codes, IP addresses, network properties, personal or library password, identification numbers, et cetera.
- l) Access, transmit, upload, download or distribute material or language that is pornographic, abusive, sexually explicit, obscene, or accessing material advocating or constituting child pornography or abuse.
- m) Use abusive or objectionable language and display or transmit profane, abusive or threatening language. This includes but is not limited to the following: harassing, libelling, slandering, and threatening others or obscene behaviour over the Internet/e-mail.
- n) Violate copyright or otherwise use intellectual property of another individual or organization.
- o) Violate another user's privacy.
- p) Misrepresent him/her or provide false identity.
- q) Violate any applicable provincial-government- or local laws, ordinances, rules or regulations. Such users will be subject to prosecution.

#### **11. Revision of policy**

This policy will be revised and re-submitted in its entirety at least every 2 years for approval by the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality