



LIBRARY PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET POLICY

1. POLICY PURPOSE

McKinlay Shire Council has a responsibility to provide internet and computer access to meet the recreational, cultural, informational and learning needs of the McKinlay Shire community and those that visit the shire.

Providing access to these services supports the library's commitment to maintaining a high quality of service using new forms of information technology and also meets State Library's requirement to provide free access to the internet.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- To ensure fair and equitable access to the internet and wireless services;
- To promote freedom of information;
- To promote lifelong learning and digital literacy;
- To establish guidelines for acceptable use of the public internet and wireless services at McKinlay Shire Library branches;
- To establish guidelines for acceptable use of public internet, computer hardware, and wireless (Wi-Fi) services across all McKinlay Shire Council library branches;
- To clearly define user responsibilities, including parental and guardian supervision of minors using online services and library spaces;
- To ensure physical and online library environments promote the safety, cultural safety, and wellbeing of children in accordance with the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld) and the 10 Child Safe Standards;
- To protect the integrity, security, and operation of McKinlay Shire Council's information technology infrastructure.

3. DEFINITIONS

To assist in interpretation, the following shall apply:

Child / Minor is any individual under the age of 18 years.

Council shall mean the Mayor and Councillors of McKinlay Shire Council

Library shall mean a Library belonging to, or under the control and management of, McKinlay Shire Council and include all library locations

Member shall mean any user who has fulfilled the requirements for membership of the Library and has a current membership card

Offensive material may include, but is not limited to, images or text containing nudity, obscenity, graphic violence or any material that may make other library users uncomfortable

Public Peripherals are standard, non-executable plug and play hardware items such as USB storage drives, headphones and personal device charging cables

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Review Date: October 2029

Reportable Conduct is defined under the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)*, including allegations or concerns regarding child abuse, harm, or sexual misconduct involving staff, volunteers, or contractors.

Staff are defined as employees, volunteers, trainees, and contractors engaged by McKinlay Shire Council.

User shall mean any person, whether or not a member, who visits a Library for the purpose of using Library resources and/or facilities

Unattended Child is a child under 10 years of age who is not accompanied by a parent, guardian, or responsible adult (aged 18 or older) within visual and reasonable physical distance inside the library premises.

4. POLICY CONTENT

Public computer and wireless access

McKinlay Shire Council Library Service internet and wireless service is available only during opening hours. Connection to the wireless service is free of charge. Library PC's and Library internet are also available free of charge. Printing is available via Library PC's however charges do apply. Users can either be current members or visitors to McKinlay Shire Council Library Service.

While McKinlay Shire Council provides open access to information, internet terminals are situated in prominent, open public areas to assist in self-monitoring and community safety. Council accepts no responsibility for any technical problems in accessing sites and cannot guarantee continuous internet or wireless access during time of usage. Temporary wireless interruptions may occur as normal events in the provision of the wireless services. Computers are configured to clear user session data upon log-out.

The current service provided does not censor access to material on the internet. The Library regards current filtering software as inaccurate and unreliable. These software packages do not take into account the wide range of clients who use the Internet in a public Library. The use of such software may lead to both adults and children missing out on vital information. Literature on this issue is available from the State Library of Queensland's website (<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/>)

The Library seeks to address the concerns of parents and the community by placing internet computers in full public view. The Library cannot guarantee the quality of information on the Internet. It is the responsibility of the patron to determine the validity, quality and relevancy of the information accessed. The Library cannot ensure access to sites on the internet, waiting times may be long and connections to all sites cannot be guaranteed.

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Parents and legal guardians retain ultimate responsibility for supervising their children's online research, browsing and media consumption while using library computers or Council Wi-Fi networks. Displaying material unsuitable for minors in open view of child-friendly areas is strictly prohibited.

The following services may be accessed from the Library internet service:

- World Wide Web pages;
- Library catalogues;
- Usenet news
- Electronic journals and texts;
- Discussion lists;
- Internet relay chat;
- Email (where patrons know the internet address of their account, or through free services such as "Hotmail"). Library staff may be able to provide information on how to access email accounts. Please ask staff for assistance.

McKinlay Shire Libraries will not be held responsible for inadvertent exposure by minors or adults to potentially offensive material accessed by internet users on Library equipment. The Library is not and will not be held responsible for what a minor or adult may locate on the Internet. As with other library materials, restriction of a minor's access to information on the Internet is the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

5. Child Safe Environment & Unattended Minors

McKinlay Shire Council is committed to embedding the Queensland Child Safe Standards (under the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*) across all library operations. Library facilities are open public spaces accessible by all members of the community. Library staff provide assistance in accessing information and resources but do not provide child care or direct supervision services.

1. Parental Responsibility & Supervision Requirements

- Children Under 10 years must be accompanied and actively supervised by a parent, guardian, or responsible adult (18 years or older) at all times while on Library premises or accessing technology services.
- Children Aged 10 to 17 Years may use the Library and public internet unassisted, provided their behaviour adheres to the Public Conduct terms. Parents/guardians remain legally responsible for their minor's conduct and internet access choices.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to educate their children on personal online safety, including avoiding sharing private details, passwords, or engaging with unverified online contacts.

2. Management of Unattended or At-Risk Minors

Where a minor is left unattended in circumstances that create safety or wellbeing concerns, Library staff will initiate the following response:

- Staff will attempt to contact the child's parent or legal guardian to request immediate collection.

- If an unattended child under 12 remains at the Library at closing time, or if staff cannot contact a responsible adult after reasonable attempts, staff will not leave the child alone outside or transport the child in a personal vehicle.
- Staff will contact the Queensland Police Service (QPS) to take responsibility for the safety and care of the child.

3. Staff Suitability & Safeguarding

- All Library staff, volunteers, and third-party contractors delivering youth programs are required to hold a valid Queensland Working with Children Check (Blue Card).
- Staff must promptly report any child harm allegations, disclosures, or reportable conduct to the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) in compliance with Council's Child Protection and Reportable Conduct framework.

Public Conduct

Any equipment malfunction should be reported to Library staff immediately. Patrons should not attempt to "repair" hardware or software problems. Patrons may not, under any circumstances, use their own personal software on Library computers or attach equipment to the Library's hardware. Unacceptable conduct may lead to the suspension of Library privileges. Unacceptable behaviour includes:-

- Destruction of or damage to Council equipment or software;
- Licence infringement;
- Attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords or data belonging to others;
- Display of offensive or inappropriate material;
- Unauthorised monitoring of electrical communications; and,
- Intentional unauthorised infringement of copyright.

Library staff reserve the right to immediately suspend Library internet privileges, request patrons to leave the facility or contact law enforcement where public conduct breaches this policy, compromises network security or threatens public or child safety. Written notice will be given in writing to the patron (or their parent/guardian/carer in the case of a minor) informing of the suspension.

Copyright

Much of the material, including software, available is protected by copyright. Patrons are personally responsible for complying with all applicable laws governing copyright materials. A copyright owner is entitled to take legal action against a patron who infringes his or her copyright. Unless otherwise permitted by the Copyright Act 1968, unauthorised copying of a work in which copyright subsists (including digital copying) may infringe the copyright in that work. The Copyright Act and associated Regulations are available online at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Home>



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