POLICY ON PUBLIC INTERNET ACCESS

SECTION 1: ACCESS TO INTERNET RESOURCES

The Bethel Public Library provides its users with access to the Internet as part of its ongoing commitment to make information available through a variety of formats and from a variety of sources. The Internet, as an information resource, enables the Library to provide information beyond the confines of its own collection.

The Internet is a global and unregulated information network. It is filled with resources that can educate, inform, and entertain. However, access to material of a controversial or mature nature, as well as to material that is not accurate, complete, or current, is unavoidable. The Library cannot control the information available through the Internet and does not accept responsibility for its quality, accuracy, or currency. The Library advises users to exercise judgment when evaluating the usefulness and reliability of material found on the Internet.

The Bethel Public Library provides unfiltered access to the Internet. As with all Library materials, restriction of a child's access to the Internet is the responsibility of his or her parents or legal guardians. The Library staff cannot and does not act in loco parentis. Library staff is available to provide assistance and help to identify appropriate sites. Parents or guardians are encouraged to read the brochure “Children and the Internet – Using it Safely, Using it Wisely” available free in the Children’s Library.

SECTION 2: CONFIDENTIALITY

The Bethel Public Library strives to preserve confidentiality and privacy for all Library users. However, absolute privacy for patrons using electronic resources in the Library cannot be guaranteed. All users are asked to respect the privacy of other users and not attempt to censor or comment on what others are viewing.

SECTION 3: RESPONSIBILITIES OF USERS

The Library’s computers may be used only for lawful purposes. Unacceptable uses include, but are not limited to: accessing material that is obscene, pornographic, or “harmful to minors” (consistent with state laws and/or local standards); harassing, libeling or slandering others; destruction of or damage to equipment, software or hardware; disruption or unauthorized monitoring of electronic communications; or unauthorized copying of copyright-protected
materials. Rules governing acceptable use of the Library's Internet equipment are posted for patron inspection.

Internet users who release personal information do so at their own risk. Anything accessed or entered on the Library's computers is not secure and may be accessible to others.

The Library's Internet workstations are located in public areas that are shared by patrons of all ages. Internet users are asked to refrain from accessing potentially offensive information or images. It is the user's responsibility to exercise good judgment when accessing the Internet, and to be alert to any information or images that could be considered offensive to other patrons in a library environment.

User sessions and/or Internet usage privileges will be suspended or revoked if, in the opinion of the Library administration, use and/or behavior at the Internet workstations is not in accordance with this policy, or with in-library computer workstation usage rules. In addition, any illegal activity involving the use of the Library's computers, including the Internet, will be subject to prosecution by the appropriate authorities.

SECTION 4: POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE, AMENDMENTS, AND REVISIONS:

This policy is effective upon approval of the Library Board of Directors. Amendments and/or revisions to this policy shall be formulated and recommended to the Board by the Policy Committee. The policy may then be amended and/or revised at the regular meeting of the Board, following the meeting at which the amendment and/or revision was proposed.

Approved by the Library Board of Directors October 1996

Revised and approved: April 26, 1999
September 23, 2002
September 22, 2003