

Wolcott Public Library

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Privacy and confidentiality is a fundamental tenet of the professional ethics of librarianship. The American Library Association's Code of Ethics states that "We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed acquired or transmitted." Also, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 11-25, personally identifiable information contained in the circulation records of the Wolcott Public Library shall be confidential.

Names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and information on materials borrowed or money owed by customers are confidential. Library staff shall not provide information of a personal nature about any borrowers except to the borrower himself or to the parent/guardian of a borrower who is a minor.

The Library's privacy policies are in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

Information Collected

Information we gather and retain about library users includes the following:

- Name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, birth date for minors (required for registering for a library card)
- Records of material checked out, charges owed, payments made
- Requests for interlibrary loan or reference service
- Sign-up information for library classes or programs

We will not collect or retain your personally identifiable information without your consent. (By registering for a library card, you consent to give us the information we request on the application.)

If you consent to give us your information, we will keep it confidential and will not sell, license, or disclose it to any third party, except an agent working under contract to the library, without your consent, unless we are required by law to do so.

We avoid creating unnecessary records and we do not engage in practices that might place information on public view.

We purge collected data on a regular schedule. We have invested in appropriate technology to protect the security of our patrons' information while it is in the library's custody.

Access to Personal Information

We respect the privacy and confidentiality of all library users, no matter their age. Parents and guardians of minor children who wish to obtain access to their child's library records must provide the child's library card, card number, or proof of identity.

Library staff may access your personal data only for the purpose of performing their assigned duties. Staff will not disclose any personal data we collect from you or any other party except where required by law, or to fulfill your specific request.

Third Party Security

We ensure that the Library's contracts, licenses, and off site computer service arrangements reflect our policies and obligations concerning user privacy and confidentiality. When connecting to licensed databases outside the Library, we release only information that authenticates users as registered members of the Library or the Bibliomation Network.

Nevertheless, users must be aware, when accessing remote sites, that there are limits to the privacy protection the Library can provide. The Library has limited ability to protect the privacy of information once it is outside of our control. We cannot be responsible for privacy and security of non-library websites for which there may be links on our web site.

Enforcement and Redress

If you have a question, concern, or complaint about our handling of your private information, you may file written comments with the Library Director. We will respond in a timely manner and may conduct a privacy investigation.

Public libraries face the dilemma of seeking to protect the privacy of their patrons, while also responding to national security concerns. The Library Director is custodian of library records and is responsible for responding to public records requests and inquiries from law enforcement officers. The Director may delegate this authority. Library staff shall immediately refer all law enforcement inquiries to the Library Director. The Director may confer with the Town Attorney before determining the proper response to any request for records. We will not make library records available except in response to a subpoena, warrant, court order, or decision of the district attorney on a public records request. If an agent or officer requesting such information does not have a subpoena, warrant, court order, or other authorized documentation compelling production of the information, the Library Director will explain the Library's privacy policy and inform the agent or officer that the information is not available without the production of authorized documentation. If the agent or officer does produce authorized documentation, the Library Director will immediately refer it to legal counsel for review and based upon advice of legal counsel, will act accordingly.

Sec. 11-25. Reports by libraries. Confidentiality of records.

(a) The libraries established under the provisions of this chapter, and any free public library receiving a state appropriation, shall annually make a report to the State Library Board.

(b) (1) Notwithstanding section 1-210, records maintained by libraries that can be used to identify any library user, or link any user to a library transaction, regardless of format, shall be kept confidential, except that the records may be disclosed to officers, employees and agents of the library, as necessary for operation of the library.

(2) Information contained in such records shall not be released to any third party, except (A) pursuant to a court order, or (B) with the written permission of the library user whose personal information is contained in the records.

(3) For purposes of this subsection, “library” includes any library regularly open to the public, whether public or private, maintained by any industrial, commercial or other group or association, or by any governmental agency, but does not include libraries maintained by schools and institutions of higher education.

(4) No provision of this subsection shall be construed to prevent a library from publishing or making available to the public statistical reports regarding library registration and use of library materials, if such reports do not contain personally identifying information.

Approved by the Library Board

December 7, 2009

Amended July 11, 2016