

Privacy Policy - DRAFT

Overview

The Thomas Memorial Library takes steps to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all library patrons. Our commitment to patron privacy and confidentiality has deep roots not only in the law but also in the ethics and practices of librarianship. In accordance with the American Library Association's Code of Ethics: "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." Confidential borrower information is not discussed in any public area of the library or in the presence of third parties such as volunteers, TML Committee or TML Foundation members.

Under Maine state law (Title 27, Chapter 4a, Section 121) public libraries are required to keep patron records confidential. These records may only be released with the express written permission of the patron involved or as the result of a court-ordered subpoena. Library records may be subject to disclosure to law enforcement officials under provisions of state law, the USA PATRIOT Act or in a civil lawsuit. Librarians may be forbidden from reporting to a patron that records have been requested or obtained under provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act.

TML avoids creating unnecessary records, avoids retaining records not needed for library business purposes, and will not engage in practices that might place personally identifiable information on public view without a patron's consent.

Information the library may gather and retain about library patrons includes the following:

- Information required to register for a library card (e.g. name, address, telephone number, email address, birth date)
- Records of materials currently checked out, charges owed, payments made
- Materials being kept on hold or in reserve for an individual
- Records of materials returned but not checked out by another patron (e.g. last check out)
- Sign-up information for library classes or programs
- Interlibrary loan records for the current and previous fiscal year
- Program attendance, internet sign-up, reference questions and database search records (tally only; does not contain any personally identifiable information)

The library will not collect or retain a patron's private and personally identifiable information without consent. Individuals may choose to submit their names, email

addresses, postal addresses or telephone numbers in order to receive library services, such as registering for library cards, ordering materials, receiving personal responses to questions or being added to specific mailing lists (library newsletter). If consent is given, personally identifiable information will be kept confidential and the library will not sell, license or disclose it.

Parents and Children

We respect the privacy of all library patrons, no matter their age. Parents, guardians or caretakers of a child under age 18 who wish to obtain access to a child's library records, including the number or titles of materials checked out or overdue, must provide the child's library card or card number.

Reserved Material

When a library staff member contacts an individual regarding overdue materials or material on reserve, the staff member will not leave specific item information with a third party or on an answering machine.

Specific item information will only be shared with the person requesting the material. Parents of children under age 18 may request the title of items checked out to their children and provide the child's library card or card number. Library staff will leave a phone number for the individual to call.

Having Other People Access A Patron's Account

Any person can have access to an account if they have the library card or if a patron chooses to link patron accounts. If a library card has been lost or it is suspected that someone is using the account without permission contact the library immediately.