

TRUSTEES' HANDBOOK—POLICIES
BOXFORD TOWN LIBRARIES

Policy on Confidentiality of Library Patron Information

The Board of Trustees of the Boxford Town Library strives to protect patron privacy to the maximum extent possible. Patron use of library resources including materials borrowed, access to commercial databases, catalogue requests, library reference materials and interlibrary loan requests, will be treated with the same confidentiality as the patron's library card record information of name, address, telephone number and email address.

Any patron data stored (either intentionally or incidentally) on our computer network, or our consortium's servers, is confidential and protected by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 78, Section 7, which reads in part "...that part of the records of a public library which reveals the identity and intellectual pursuits of a person using such library shall not be a public record...". Patrons are advised that any rights to confidentiality under the same law may be overridden by the provision of the U.S. Patriot Act and/or federal Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA).

The library staff is instructed to be sensitive to patrons' privacy. Personal records and information will not be shared with others, including library generated telephone messages regarding patron requests for material. In addition, we recommend patrons be aware of the following:

- Security in a networked electronic environment cannot be guaranteed. Even the most secure networks can be susceptible to outside intervention. Therefore, all transactions, files, and communications are vulnerable to unauthorized access and use, and therefore should be considered public. Be sure to log out of any web-based service that you have logged into. We maintain no permanent records of what you view or the documents you create.
- Data loss is a fact of life in an electronic environment and may jeopardize patron privacy. Loss of data is more likely on library computers than on a personal computer in your home. To protect your privacy, our computers have software that keeps data from being stored permanently on the hard drive. Once the computer is rebooted for any reasons, any stored information from your session is deleted. It is important for the patron to know that staff may not always be available to help or be able to retrieve lost information.
- The Library neither sells nor shares patron information with third parties
- Library computers are located in public areas that must be shared by library users of all ages, backgrounds, values and sensibilities. It is important that patrons recognize the importance of not interfering with others' privacy. Computer users are asked to respect the privacy of other computer users. This includes not using someone else's login/password, not modifying someone else's password, not trying to gain access to someone else's data or search history, not retrieving someone else's printout, and not "hovering" over others while waiting to use the computer.

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- The Boxford Town Library Internet Access Policy clearly states “The Library does not select the material available on the Internet. The Library is not accountable for the accuracy, content, nature, or quality of information obtained through the Internet, nor does the Library endorse viewpoints presented on the Internet. As with library materials, the responsibility for determining what is valuable or appropriate lies with the library patron or, in the case of minors, their parents or guardians.” Patrons should use discretion and recognize that the public setting does not give patrons complete privacy. Library staff will speak with patrons about inappropriate materials on Library computers.
- The Library has no control over how websites patrons visit on our computers use your personal data, and the degree of privacy they extend to you. The Library encourages patrons to review their privacy policies individually.
- We cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of any transaction, particularly e-commerce transactions
- Library staff will be instructed to immediately refer any inquiry regarding patron information to the director (or designee). The staff should not attempt to service officials nor interfere with the execution of a warrant, subpoena or other legal requests.
- All requests involving legal or judicial matters or requests from law enforcement will be referred to the town’s legal counsel. Town counsel is typically contacted through the town administrator’s office; however, if the Library Director (or designee) is unable to contact the Town Administrator or Assistant Town Administrator, the library director (or designee) is to contact town counsel directly.
- The director (or designee) shall ask for and photocopy positive identification of those persons requesting information. A file will be kept with the copy of identification, a record of the legal request and all costs associated with compliance of the request.
- With regard to the Patriot Act and the execution of a FISA search warrant, the library director (or designee) will contact town counsel through the Town Administrator’s Office. The director (or designee) will request counsel to be present during the execution of a FISA search if time permits.
- The director (or designee) shall be present during the execution of all legal searches to ensure that only records identified in the warrant or subpoena are viewed or scanned.

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