

Holyoke Public Library Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

Goals and scope

The Holyoke Public Library champions the protection of personal privacy. Protecting Library user privacy and keeping confidential information that identifies individuals or associates individuals with their use of Library books, materials, equipment, programs, facilities, and/or staff assistance is an integral principle of the library. This policy affirms the library's commitment to privacy, explains the information that the library collects, and alerts visitors to Library facilities and users of remotely accessed Library services to the privacy choices they face. The Holyoke Public Library supports and adheres to the American Library Association's [Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records](#) and ALA Council document CD#19.3 [Resolution on the Retention of Library Usage Records](#).

The library collects only the minimum personal information necessary to provide effective services for its users. Library records that identify Library users by name are confidential. Such records will not be made available except as permitted in the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 180 of the Acts of 1988 (see Appendix A.), or with the explicit permission of the user in question or pursuant to judicial process, subpoena or court order. The USA PATRIOT Act expands the federal government's authority for access to Library records and documents to protect against international terrorism and clandestine intelligence activities. It also expands federal law enforcements' authorization to track telephone and electronic communication, including any dialing, routing, addressing, or signaling information and the actual content of the communication. This law prohibits library workers from informing users if federal agents have obtained records about them.

No records can be made available to any inquiries, governmental or otherwise, unless a process, subpoena, or order has been served by a court of competent jurisdiction and the Director has consulted with the City Solicitor to determine if it is proper to release the requested information. All processes, subpoenas, or orders served to employees must be referred to the Director. The Director will notify the Holyoke Public Library Corporation Board of Directors. The library shall, subject to legal advice, comply with the process, subpoena, or order.

This policy applies to all Library records, including but not limited to records related to the circulation of Library materials, computer database searches, interlibrary loan transactions, reference queries, holds, use of restricted materials, or use of audiovisual materials.

These prohibitions apply to the release of information to the parents or guardians of minors who have their own cards. However, the Holyoke Public Library recognizes that instances may arise when it may be necessary for a parent or legal guardian to be provided with information about their child's library records (for example, if the child's materials have been misplaced). In this case, there are procedures that will enable parents, or other parties who are financially

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responsible for the child's library materials, to obtain information about the records of a minor child aged eight years or under. Upon statement of the above reasons, the parent or legal guardian will receive the information verbally or printed out.

Guidelines

By using the public workstations at the Holyoke Public Library, patrons agree to be bound by the following:

- The library will keep confidential all such information that it collects or maintains to the fullest extent permitted by federal, state and local law, including the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 180 of the Acts of 1988 and the USA PATRIOT Act. To make this policy easy to find, the library makes it available on the Library's website.
- Protection of confidentiality extends to information sought or received, and materials consulted, borrowed, and received.
- Protection of confidentiality includes database search records, circulation records, interlibrary loan records, and other personally identifiable uses of library materials or services.
- Any Library user information will be used only to provide or improve Library services.
- The online catalog offers Library user self-activated features, such as My Reading History. Information gathered and stored using this feature is only accessible to the library user. There is no administrative interface to this information for Library staff and, therefore, it is not retrievable by anyone other than the user. The user has the option to delete their reading history at any time.

Library user account information is located on the CW MARS' server and is protected under its [privacy policy](#).

Library Cards and Circulation Records

- To receive a Library card, Library users are required to provide identifying information such as name, mailing address, and email or phone number. This identifying information is retained as long as the library user continues to use the library card.
- Through the CW MARS library network, a Library user's own record includes current information, items currently checked out or on hold, as well as overdue materials and fines.
- When fines accrue on a user's account, the library does maintain record of items that have been borrowed but returned after the due date or are still outstanding on the user's record. When overdue materials are returned and all associated fines are waved, the information associated with the library card number is deleted.
- The library normally sends overdue notices via email or by mail, but occasionally telephones. The library notifies users via telephone, email, or mail when requested items are ready for pickup.
- Museum passes are loaned through a third party hosted service; Library users are protected under its privacy policy.

- The library does not sell, lease or otherwise distribute or disclose usernames, email addresses, postal addresses, telephone numbers, or other personal information to outside parties.

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)

The Library uses RFID chip technology to secure and circulate Library materials. The system server contains a transaction database and log file for gathering monthly reports. The information stored on the RFID chip/tag is limited to the item barcode that can only be read by Library equipment. RFID is not used for Library cards.

Public Computer Use

The library uses an online computer reservation program that utilizes Library cards or visitor cards for the public to reserve computers to access the internet and other resources. The library's public computer stations are programmed to delete the history of a Library user's internet session and all searches once an individual session is completed.

Reference Questions, Distance and In-house

- Information provided by a library user via email will be used only for purposes described at the point of collection, such as to send information or provide Library services to the library user or respond to a Library user's questions or comments.
- If contact information is provided, the library may contact the library user to clarify a comment or question, or to learn about the level of customer satisfaction with Library services.
- The library treats reference questions, regardless of format of transmission (in person, via telephone, email, or online) confidentially. Personal identifying information related to these questions is purged on an ongoing basis.
- Email is not necessarily secure against interception and may be subject to disclosure requirements of the Public Records Act or other legal disclosure requirements.
- Users may not misrepresent themselves for purposes of fraud.

Website Use

- The library retains no personal information about a Library user when they visit our website.
- The library has links to many federal, state, and local organizations, as well as commercial sites. Once users transfer to other sites, they are subject to the privacy policies of the new sites.

Appendix A.

Chapter 78, Section 7 of the Massachusetts General Laws (as amended by Chapter 180, Acts of 1988)

Section 7. A town may establish and maintain public libraries for its inhabitants under regulations prescribed by the city council or by the town, and may receive, hold and manage any gift, bequest or devise [sic] therefore. The city council of a city or the selectmen of a town may place in such library the books, reports and laws which may be received from the commonwealth.

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 as defined by clause Twenty-six of section seven of chapter four. Library authorities may disclose or exchange information relating to library users for the purposes of interlibrary cooperation and coordination, including but not limited to, the purposes of facilitating the sharing of resources among library jurisdictions as authorized by clause (1) of section nineteen E or enforcing the provisions of sections ninety-nine and one hundred of chapter two hundred and sixty-six.