

The Forbush Memorial Library is committed to user privacy and confidentiality. The confidentiality of library records is in accordance with library ethics. The Forbush Memorial Library follows the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association.

<https://www.ala.org/tools/ethics> The library does not retain the borrowing history of any patron.

Confidentiality and your library record

Massachusetts General Laws (MGL), Chapter 78, Section 7 states “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-sixth of section seven of chapter four.”

Confidentiality extends to the following:

- Registration records (name, address, telephone number, etc.)
- Email addresses
- Circulation records
- Interlibrary loan transactions
- Database search records
- Reference interviews or information sought or received
- Library materials consulted or borrowed

Circulation, registration information, and information retrieval records may be disclosed in the following circumstances:

- To the library cardholder with card or proper ID.
- To the parents or legal guardians, who sign the library card application for children under 16 years of age and have access to their children’s library transactions.
- To the financially responsible parents or legal guardians who are to be provided with information about their child’s library records (for example, when a child’s library materials have incurred fines, or the materials have been misplaced). Should this happen, there are procedures that will enable parents or other parties, who are financially responsible for the child’s library materials, to obtain information about the records of dependent children. When the above reasons exist, the parent or legal guardian will receive the information verbally, printed on paper, or in an email if the adult’s email address is in the child’s library record.
- To staff of the Massachusetts Library System or CWMARS members acting within the scope of their duties to administer the system and in facilitating interlibrary loans.
- To persons authorized by the cardholder.
- To representatives of any local, state, or federal government, pursuant to subpoena or search warrant authorized under the authority of federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or investigative power. (For example, warrants or subpoenas issued under the USA Patriot Act of 2001

<https://www.fincen.gov/resources/statutes-regulations/usa-patriot-act>

In such cases, referral should be made to the Library Director who may consult legal counsel.

What is retained within the scope of this policy?

- Personal information (e.g., names, addresses, etc.) for active cardholders is kept indefinitely.
- Circulation records for physical materials are deleted when an item is checked in, but for items that have incurred fines or were unreturned, the records remain until the account is settled by paying what is owed, items returned, or another patron checks out the same item.
- Retention of circulation records for materials checked out through Libby depends on your app settings.
- Computer records (e.g., records of databases searched) are kept by computer, not patron, until that computer is rebooted. The computers do not store usernames or passwords of an individual's internet or database transactions (e.g., web-based email services).
- Library program signup sheets with names and contract information are destroyed after the program has taken place. Meeting room reservations with contact information and purpose of the meeting are kept indefinitely.
- Email addresses that are part of the patron's library record are kept as long as the record exists but are not shared with other persons or organizations. The email addresses are used for library purposes ONLY.
- The library, at times, uses patron email or postal addresses for the library's internal mailing lists. The library may conduct promotional campaigns to inform the community of our services.

Other related guidelines

- Parents and legal guardians are strongly encouraged to monitor which materials their own children read or view.
- Because the library does not filter websites and because some materials in the library may be unsuitable for young children, parents and legal guardians are referred to the library's Child Safety and Behavior, Personal Behavior, and Library Technology Acceptable Use policies.
- The Board of Trustees adheres to the philosophy that what a patron reads, or views is a matter of privacy. All library employees understand that such records are confidential and not to be made available to anyone except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized by law. Anyone making such an inquiry shall be referred to the Library Director.