

Southern Lehigh Public Library
Confidentiality of Library Records Policy

Revised 3/21/17

1. The Board of Directors of Southern Lehigh Public Library (BOD–SLPL) specifically recognizes the confidentiality of records related to circulation of library materials that contain names or other personally identifying information regarding the users of the library in accordance with Pennsylvania law Title 24 PA C.S. § 9375.
2. The BOD-SLPL supports the concept of intellectual freedom and the right of each citizen, regardless of age, to free access to information without fear of intimidation or recrimination. The library's confidentiality policy safeguards the first amendment and privacy rights of library users. The library advises employees, volunteers, patrons, and third-party vendors with whom the library has contracted that all library records containing names or other personally identifying information regarding the users of the library are confidential and will not be shared.
3. The BOD-SLPL further subscribes to the American Library Association Library Code of Ethics, Section III, which states, "We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and materials consulted, borrowed, acquired, or transmitted."
4. In most instances, Southern Lehigh Public Library safeguards access to patron library records and restricts access to that information to only the patron who owns the library card and provides that card or to the parent/legal guardian of a minor child with the stipulations and exceptions specified below in item #7. Exceptions are granted for the following circumstances:
 - When the library has exhausted all efforts to encourage a patron to return overdue materials and/or pay overdue fees or replacement fees for lost/damaged materials, the patron's name, address, telephone number, email address, total monetary value of materials, and total number of items overdue/lost/damaged will be reported to the collection agency with whom the library has contracted. No additional personally identifying information will be shared, i.e. titles of items, and the library has insured in its contract with the agency that the agency will respect the patron's confidentiality.
 - When the library is experiencing problems with its public access computers, library automation software, or any other technology services it may be necessary to contact third-party vendors with whom the library has contracted for assistance. The library has insured in its contracts with these vendors that patron privacy and confidentiality will be respected.
5. No patron records will be made available to federal, state, or local law enforcement agencies except by a court order as required by law.
 - Court orders from law enforcement officers will be referred to the Library Director who will consult legal counsel. Other library employees will not provide any patron records to law enforcement agencies under any circumstances.
 - The library will take such action as is necessary to determine that any court order or process issued by any court or pursuant to any court rule or any agency of government requires that such records be made available.
6. When library employees or volunteers speak either in person, online via email, or by telephone to anyone other than the patron, or to persons who cannot produce their library card or identification, information regarding items checked out, items overdue, fines, and items on hold will be restricted as to information that does not reveal the content, such as number of items or figures for fines owed. Addresses, phone numbers, or any other personal information from patron records will not be given out under the above circumstances. When a patron is unable to confirm his or her identity as required, a print-out of the requested information or an email containing the information can be sent to the patron using the postal/email addresses provided in the registration records.
7. The Library record of a child has the same confidentiality protection under library policy as that of any other patron with the following exception:
 - Parents or legal guardians are permitted access to the records of their minor children through the age of 17 (seventeen). The parent/legal guardian must be accompanied by the child, provide the child's library card, and/or provide other acceptable identification. In the case of telephone inquiries, the library card number and verification of the child's address, telephone number, and date of birth are required.

- Southern Lehigh Public Library recognizes that parents or legal guardians who have signed their minor children's registration cards have assumed the financial responsibility for materials checked out to their children's cards; therefore, parents or legal guardians will be provided with specific information about their minor children's library records when materials are overdue or lost.
8. Adult patrons may waive their rights to the confidentiality of their library records and grant them to another adult cardholder by executing a limited waiver form, set forth in Appendix I. The limited waiver form must also be executed by the adult who will be permitted access to the adult patron's otherwise confidential library records.
 9. No patron may use this policy to steal library materials. In the event of theft, the library will release to the appropriate law enforcement officers the relevant patron records, including the name and address of the person committing the theft and a list of materials stolen with the replacement costs.
 10. Patrons are encouraged to inform themselves of all library policies before signing their own or a minor child's library card registration.
 11. Complaints
 - Complaints of violations of this policy must be received in writing within 10 days of the violation.
 - The Director shall respond to a complaint in writing, within 30 days of receipt of the complaint, detailing any corrective action taken.
 - All reasonable efforts will be made to resolve the complaint.
 12. Violations of the terms of this policy by employees and volunteers will result in disciplinary procedures.

This policy revised and adopted by Southern Lehigh Public Library Board of Directors at their regularly scheduled board meeting on March 21, 2017.

APPENDIX I

**WAIVER OF RIGHT OF
CONFIDENTIALITY OF LIBRARY RECORDS**

I, _____, hereby grant a limited waiver of my right to have my records at the Southern Lehigh Public Library remain confidential in accordance with the library's Confidentiality of Library Records Policy.

This limited waiver is granted to allow _____ to represent my interests regarding library materials I have signed out, put on hold, or have not returned to the library in a timely manner (overdue).

I may revoke this limited waiver at any time by written notice to the Southern Lehigh Public Library.

Cardholder's Signature

Cardholder Address:

Cardholder Telephone:

Cardholder Email:

Date:

Library Staff Person Accepting Form:

ACCEPTANCE OF WAIVER

I, _____, accept the limited waiver granted to me by _____ as set forth above.

Signature

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Date:

Library Staff Person Accepting Form: