

## **Privacy Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to define how your personally identifiable information is collected, shared, and protected at the Northborough Free Library.

Confidentiality applies to information sought or received and materials consulted or borrowed. It includes database search records, reference questions, library card records, checkout history, interlibrary loan transactions, program registration records, computer usage, library visits, and all other personally identifiable uses of library materials, facilities, or services.

Library staff may not use patron library accounts or information retrieval records for personal use and may not share this information with other individuals or groups for any purpose, except under the following circumstances:

- With other library personnel within the scope of their library duties.
- Representatives of any local, state, or federal government, with a subpoena or search warrant authorized under the authority of federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or investigative power.

If the Library is served with any such subpoena or search warrant, the Library Director will consult with the Town Administrator, Town Legal Counsel, and/or the Northborough Police Department to determine if the subpoena or search warrant is in proper form and if there is a valid basis for its issuance before providing confidential information.

**Minor Patrons:** Massachusetts General Laws Part I. Administration of the Government (Ch. 1-182) Ch. 78, § 7 prohibits disclosure by a public library of a patron's identity or patron's borrowing history. The law does not differentiate among categories of library patrons and applies equally to records of minor patrons and those of adults. Requests for information on the library account of any patron, regardless of age, will not be granted.

## **Retention of Confidential Information**

**Circulation Records:** Library materials are circulated via the C/WMARS automation system. As a member of the C/WMARS network, the Northborough Free Library agrees to follow the network Privacy Policy with regards to the handling of records and information stored within the automation software. A copy

of the network Privacy Policy will be provided upon request.

**Searches of the online catalog:** The Library does not require personal information to use the online catalog. Catalog searches are conducted via the C/WMARS automation software. Once a search is completed, a patron may clear their own search history. In-house computer search histories are automatically erased when the computer restarts. Neither the Library's computers nor the automation software retain copies of any search.

**Electronic Databases and the Internet:** The Library licenses commercial electronic resources from a variety of vendors independently. The Library will make every effort to restrict electronic database vendors from collecting and using identifying personal information of library users, however it provides no guarantee that personal information will not be shared with third parties. Copies of any product's privacy policy will be provided upon request.

Additionally, some resources are made available from the C/WMARS network and the MA Board of Library Commissioners. The contracts for those are handled by the respective organizations. Copies of any product's privacy policy will be provided upon request.

While use of any licensed database is at the discretion of the library patron, in order to access content on licensed databases, library patrons may be required to provide their library card number and library PIN for the purposes of verifying authorized use of the product. Some databases may require additional information, which should be provided at the discretion of the user.

**Library Newsletters:** Subscription to Library newsletters is done on an opt-in basis. Library patrons may unsubscribe at any time. The Library will not share, sell, or rent any newsletter list to any entity for any reason. The Library will not use any newsletter software vendor unless the vendor's privacy policy expressly states that the vendor will not use, share, or sell your information. A copy of the vendor's privacy policy will be provided upon request.

**Interlibrary Loan Records:** Patrons may borrow items not owned by the Northborough Free Library from other libraries outside of the C/WMARS network. The Library uses automation software outside of the library network to process these requests. Borrower information contained within the software is subject to the privacy policies of those organizations. A copy of these privacy policies will be provided upon request.

**Reference Questions:** When a patron asks a library staff member for information, the staff member may occasionally make written notes in the course of the

discussion. This information is destroyed as soon as the inquiry is completed. Staff may only discuss patron questions with other staff or staff from another institution for the purposes of answering a complex question. In any such case, staff will only divulge enough information as required to answer said question.

Last Update: January 2025

Approved by the Library Trustees on January 14, 2025