



Northborough Free Library

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www.NorthboroughLibrary.org

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

In recognizing the library's position of special trust with members of the public, the Trustees of the NORTHBOROUGH FREE LIBRARY wish to clarify their policy and responsibility with regard to confidential information about patrons (and patron use of library resources) that comes into the library's possession.

As the choice of books and other library materials, along with the use of the informational resources of the library, is essentially a private endeavor on the part of each individual patron, the library shall make every reasonable and responsible effort to see that information about that patron and his choices remains confidential. For people to make full and effective use of library resources they must feel unconstrained by the possibility that others may become aware of the books they read, the materials they use, the questions they ask. The awareness of the existence of such a possibility inhibits free usage of the library, its resources and facilities, and is contrary to the ALA Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement.

Therefore, the Trustees of the NORTHBOROUGH FREE LIBRARY have adopted the following guidelines concerning the disclosure of information about library patrons:

No information regarding or including:

1. A patron's name (or whether an individual is a registered borrower or has been a patron).
2. A patron's address.
3. A patron's telephone number.
4. The library's circulation records and their contents.
5. The library's borrowers' records and their contents.
6. The number or character of questions asked by patrons.
7. The frequency or content of a patron's lawful visits to the library, or any other information supplied to the library (or gathered by it) shall be given, made available or disclosed to any individual, corporation, institution, government agent or agency without a valid process, order or subpoena. Upon presentation of such a process order or subpoena, the library shall resist its enforcement until such a time as proper showing of good cause has been made in a court of competent jurisdiction.

The passage of the USA Patriot Act of 2001 (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001), Public Law 107-56, overrides local policy and state confidentiality laws. Among the patron-related information that may be investigated are circulation records (what patrons have checked out), computer use

records, interlibrary loan records, and reference interviews. Such information will be divulged according to provisions of the law. However, the library keeps only that information that is critical to its operation. No borrowing records are kept on our computers once material is returned; C/W MARS maintains a short history for maintenance purposes of the software. No history is kept of computer use. Personal information is kept on patrons only as long as it is needed.

All library employees (and those volunteers who work in its behalf) are hereby instructed to comply with these guidelines. The Trustees recognize that it is only through continued public confidence in the fact that these guidelines are indeed being upheld, can the public maintain its confidence in the public library. It is the confidence that is vital to the library's role in the community and the community's right to know.

Reviewed by Board of Trustees, June 1990
Amended September 2003