



CONFIDENTIALITY OF PATRON RECORDS POLICY

REVISIONS: June 17, 2014, March 19, 2013; July 15, 2003

ADOPTED: February 18, 2003

POLICY NUMBER: 5.01

STATUTORY REFERENCE: RCW 42.56.310

SCOPE: This policy outlines the manner in which the Whatcom County Library System will protect the confidentiality of library patrons pursuant to state and federal law.

The Whatcom County Library System (also referred to as WCLS) upholds state and federal laws intended to protect the privacy of individuals who access library materials. Privacy is essential to free speech, free thought and free association.

The Whatcom County Library System collects information and maintains records in order to conduct operations of the library. These records include but are not limited to registration records, circulation records, materials request lists, financial information and computer booking records. These records are considered confidential and protected by the right of privacy established by the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the State of Washington.

Information from the confidential records shall not be made available in response to a request from any individual, organization, entity, or any agency of federal, state or local government except as pursuant to a valid court order or other applicable legal authority under applicable state or federal law.

WCLS will take action as necessary to determine that any court order or process issued by any court or pursuant to any purported legal authority requires that such records be made available.

Any patron is entitled to information in the patron's account, such as items on loan, items on hold, items overdue and fines. A parent or legal guardian may have access to the same information for his or her unemancipated minor child under the age of eighteen (18).

WCLS may enter into agreements with reputable third-party partners in order to provide certain services to library patrons. Information that a patron submits to a third party voluntarily is not subject to library control, and therefore WCLS cannot guarantee the same level of confidentiality and privacy. Patrons are encouraged to read and become familiar with the privacy policy of these third-party partners before submitting any personally identifiable information.

The WCLS website contains links to external websites not maintained by the Whatcom County Library System. WCLS cannot be responsible for user privacy when visiting other websites. Once patrons link to another website, they are no longer subject to WCLS's Confidentiality of Patron Records Policy, but the privacy policy or statement of the website to which they have linked.

Names and contact information of adult patrons eighteen (18) years of age or older may be extracted from the patron records for use by the Whatcom County Library Foundation for the purposes of notifying patrons of upcoming events in support of WCLS or one or more of its branches, or to invite

patrons to monetarily support Whatcom County Library Foundation activities in support of the Whatcom County Library System. WCLS will not provide access to personal information to other groups unless required by law.

Library facilities are public places and persons entering Whatcom County Library System facilities have no expectation of privacy beyond the confidentiality of their library records as described in this policy.

The Executive Director is responsible for establishing administrative procedures necessary to carry out this policy.

Approved by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees:

Signed by Marvin Waschke
Board Vice-Chair

June 17, 2014
Date