

Richmond Free Library

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

I. Introduction

Privacy is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association. The Richmond Free Library believes the only way to assure the right to open inquiry is by assuring that the subject of one's interest is not subject to the scrutiny of others. Personally identifiable information about users is confidential and the library keeps that information private and confidential on their behalf.

Vermont provides guarantees of privacy in the constitution and statute law. Richmond Free Library's privacy and confidentiality policy is in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

Our commitment to your privacy and confidentiality has deep roots not only in law but also in the ethics and practices of librarianship. In accordance with the American Library Association's Code of Ethics:

"We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired, or transmitted."

II. Richmond Free Library's Commitment to Our Users Rights of Privacy and Confidentiality

This privacy policy explains your privacy and confidentiality rights, the steps this library takes to respect and protect your privacy when you use library resources, and how we deal with personally identifiable information that we may collect from our users.

1. Notice & Openness

We affirm that our library users have the right of "notice"—to be informed about the policies governing the amount and retention of personally identifiable information, and about why that information is necessary for the provision of library services.

We post publicly and acknowledge openly the privacy and information-gathering policies of this library. Whenever policies change, notice of those changes is disseminated widely to our users. In all cases we avoid creating unnecessary records, we avoid retaining records not needed for the fulfillment of the mission of the library, and we do not engage in practices that might place information on public view.

Information we may gather and retain about current and valid library users include:

User Registration Information
Circulation Information
Information Required to Provide Library Services

2. Choice & Consent

This policy explains our information practices and the choices you can make about the way the library collects and uses your information. We will not collect or retain your private and personally identifiable information without your consent. Further, if you consent to give us your personally identifiable information, we will keep it confidential and will not sell, license or disclose personal information to any third party without your consent, unless we are compelled to do so under the law or to comply with a court order.

If you wish to receive borrowing privileges, we must obtain certain information about you in order to provide you with a library account. You have the option of providing us with your e-mail address for the purpose of notifying you about your library account. You may request that we remove your e-mail address from your record at any time.

We never use or share the personally identifiable information provided to us ways unrelated to the ones described above, unless compelled to do so under 22 V.S.A. § 172 of Vermont law or to comply with a court order. For the protection of our patrons, parents seeking records of their minor

child, under age 16, may be asked to provide proof of their child's age as well as evidence they are the custodial parent such as but not limited to: birth certificate, passport, proof of child's permanent residence, school record or "Affidavit of Child Custody."

3. Access by Users

Individuals who use library services that require the function and process of personally identifiable information are entitled to view and/or update their information. You may view or update your personal information in person. You may be asked to provide some sort of verification or identification card to ensure verification of identity.

The purpose of accessing and updating your personally identifiable information is to ensure that library operations can function properly. Such functions may include notification of overdue items, recalls, reminders, etc. The library will explain the process of accessing or updating your information so that all personally identifiable information is accurate and up to date.

4. Data Integrity & Security

Data Integrity: The data we collect and maintain at the library must be accurate and secure. We take reasonable steps to assure data integrity providing our users access to your own personally identifiable data; updating data whenever possible and destroying untimely data or converting it to anonymous form.

Data Retention : We protect personally identifiable information from unauthorized disclosure once it is no longer needed to manage library services. Information that is regularly purged or shredded includes personally identifiable information on library resource use, material circulation history, and and logs.

Tracking Users : We remove links between patron records and materials borrowed when items are returned and we delete records as soon as the original purpose for data collection has been satisfied. We permit in-house access to information in all formats without creating a data trail. Our library has invested in appropriate technology to protect the security of any personally identifiable information while it is in the library's custody, and we ensure that aggregate, summary data is stripped of personally identifiable information. We do not ask library visitors or Web site users to identify themselves or reveal any personal information unless they are borrowing materials, requesting special services, registering for programs or classes, or making remote use from outside the library of those portions of the Library's Web site restricted to registered borrowers under license agreements or other special arrangements. We discourage users from choosing passwords or PINs that could reveal their identity, including social security numbers. We regularly remove cookies, Web history, cached files, or other computer and Internet use records and other software code that is placed on our computers or networks.

Third Party Security : We ensure that our library's contracts, licenses, and offsite computer service arrangements reflect our policies and legal obligations concerning user privacy and confidentiality. Should a third party require access to our users' personally identifiable information, our agreements address appropriate restrictions on the use, aggregation, dissemination, and sale of that information, particularly information about minors. In circumstances in which there is a risk that personally identifiable information may be disclosed, we will warn our users. When connecting to licensed databases outside the library, we release only information that authenticates users as "members of our community." Nevertheless, we advise users of the limits to library privacy protection when accessing remote sites.

Security Measures: Our security measures involve both managerial and technical policies and procedures to protect against loss and the unauthorized access, destruction, use, or disclosure of the data. Our managerial measures include internal organizational procedures that limit access to data and ensure that those individuals with access do not utilize the data for unauthorized purposes. Our technical security measures to prevent unauthorized access include encryption in the transmission and storage of data; limits on access through use of passwords; and storage of data on secure servers or computers that are inaccessible from a modem or network connection.

Staff access to personal data: We permit only authorized Library staff with assigned confidential passwords to access personal data stored in the Library's computer system for the purpose of performing library work. We will not disclose any personal data we collect from you to any other party except where required by law or to fulfill an individual user's service request. The Library does not sell or lease users' personal information to companies, universities, or individuals.

5. Enforcement & Redress

Our library will not share data on individuals with third parties unless required by law. Library users who have questions, concerns, or complains about the library's handling of their privacy and confidentiality rights should file written comments with the Director of the Library. We will respond in a timely manner and may conduct a privacy investigation or review of policy and procedures. 22 V.S.A. § 173. provides a right of patron action if their confidentiality rights have been violated.

Only the Library Director and Assistant Director (only in the Director's absence) are authorized to receive or comply with requests from law enforcement officers; we confer with our legal counsel before determining the proper response. We will not make library records available to any agency of state, federal, or local government unless a subpoena, warrant, court order or other investigatory document is issued by a court of competent jurisdiction that shows good cause and is in proper form. We have trained all library staff and volunteers to refer any law enforcement inquiries to library administrators.

Policy Changes

This Privacy Policy may be revised to reflect changes in the Library's policies and practices or to reflect new services and content provided by the Library. Patrons are encouraged to check this document periodically to stay informed of the Library's current privacy guidelines.