

THE
HELEN KATE FURNESS
FREE LIBRARY

100 N. Providence Road, Wallingford, PA 19086 · www.hkflibrary.org · 610-566-9331

Patron Privacy & Confidentiality Policy

The Helen Kate Furness Free Library affirms that the right to privacy is essential for intellectual freedom, which is the ability to seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. Protecting user privacy and confidentiality has long been integral to the mission of libraries and to the ethical practice of librarianship. According to the [American Library Association's Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#), "Privacy is the foundation upon which our libraries were built and the reason libraries are such a trusted part of every community."

Privacy and Confidentiality

In a library, the right to privacy is the right to open inquiry without having the subject of one's interest examined or scrutinized by others. Confidentiality exists when a library is in possession of personally identifiable information about users and keeps that information private on their behalf ([Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)).

Definition of Confidential Records

For the purpose of this policy, Confidential Records include but are not limited to: patron records, circulation records, patron requests for information, materials on hold or requested through interlibrary loan, program registrations, meeting room reservations, wireless access and computer use records, and any record that can be used to identify, directly or indirectly, any library user, or link any user to a library transaction.

Confidentiality of Library Records

Confidential Records at the Helen Kate Furness Free Library are strictly confidential and are to be used only to conduct Library business. Only individuals authorized by the Library have access to Confidential Records for the purpose of performing Library work.

In Pennsylvania, the privacy of library patron records is protected by Pennsylvania State Law which mandates that "records related to the circulation of library materials which contain the names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of the State Library or any local library which is established or maintained under any law of the Commonwealth or the library of any university, college, or educational institution chartered by the Commonwealth or the library of any public school or branch reading room, deposit station or agency operated in connection therewith, shall be confidential and shall not be made available to anyone except by a court order in a criminal proceeding." (PA 24 P.S. Section 4428)

This means that information on an individual patron record, or any information regarding who has borrowed particular items, is confidential and is not to be disclosed by any Library staff member or volunteer. One patron will not be given information about another patron.

THE
HELEN KATE FURNESS
FREE LIBRARY

100 N. Providence Road, Wallingford, PA 19086 · www.hkflibrary.org · 610-566-9331

Information from Confidential Records shall not be made available to any individual, organization, entity, or any agency of federal, state, or local government except as follows:

- To the individual named on the record;
- To the parent or legal guardian of a minor;
- To a person authorized by the patron to pick up materials on reserve on behalf of the patron; or
- Pursuant to a valid court order, or other legal authority, under applicable state or federal law.

As a member of the Delaware County Library System, the Helen Kate Furness Free Library adheres to any additional policies governing the use of the shared patron database.