



Privacy Policy

The purpose of this policy is to explain our patron’s privacy and confidentiality rights and how Swarthmore Public Library (SwPL) deals with personally identifiable information collected from its patrons.

Privacy is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association. The courts have upheld the right to privacy based on the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution. Privacy has deep roots not only in law, but also in the ethics and practice of librarianship. 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.

Pennsylvania State Law 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)

Patron library records are private and confidential under Pennsylvania law. **SPL will keep all private and identifiable information confidential and will not sell or license 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.** Only those authorized by SPL have access to personally identifying information for the purpose of performing library work.

Adopted by the Swarthmore Public Library Board of Trustees November 17, 2015