



Patron Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Adopted June 4, 2015 by North Richland Hills Library Board

Introduction

The North Richland Hills Library provides library services for life-long learning, culture, and recreation for the citizens. The library is a central resource where information and differing points of view are available. Library patrons will be free to use the library and its materials and services without government, community, or individual interference.

The North Richland Hills Library affirms that:

- The First Amendment protects free speech and a free press, and as such protects all Americans' rights to read and view information and decide for themselves their points of view and opinions.
- The First Amendment also protects against the imposition of a state or community approved orthodoxy as well as an enforced conformity of expression and belief. An individual's reading habits cannot be equated with his or her character or beliefs.
- The Constitution of the State of Texas provides that "no law shall ever be passed curtailing the liberty of speech or of the press." A corollary of those constitutional guarantees is the corresponding freedom to read what is written, hear what is spoken, and to view other forms of expression without fear of intrusion, intimidation, or reprisal. The guarantee of privacy for readers, hearers, and viewers ensures this freedom.
- The freedom to read encourages responsible citizenship and open debate in the marketplace of ideas.
- Unless required by law or to determine the patron's needs, the Library will not inquire into the purposes for which a customer requests information or books.

Texas Law Protects the Privacy of Library Users

This policy ensures the North Richland Hills Library's compliance with the Texas Government Code, Chapter 552, the Open Records/Public Information Act¹, which specifically addresses the confidentiality of library records.

The records of library materials you borrow or use, the information you seek in the library, or the library services you use cannot be disclosed to anyone except:

- As reasonably necessary for the operation of the library,
- Persons to whom the information directly relates or the parent or legal guardian who has been designated as the one responsible for a child's library use²,
- Persons authorized, in writing, by the individual named in the records,
- By order of subpoena of a district court, issued on a showing of good cause, or
- Under a valid search warrant as provided under the provisions of the U.S.A. Patriot Act.

Library staff members and volunteers who work with personally identifiable information will receive training designed to insure that they respect the privacy of library users and follow the Library's Patron Privacy and Confidentiality policy.

Library staff members and volunteers shall consider use of the Library, questions asked, materials borrowed, attendance at Library programs, and presence of the patron in the Library

as being protected. The exception being that the Library retains the right to take group photos at Library events for marketing purposes only.

Privacy of the Patron Record

The North Richland Hills Library considers individual control of a patron's card to be the most effective protection of privacy of the individual. How each individual chooses to use and share his or her card will determine the degree of privacy that the library will provide for that patron record.

To support this choice, the library will provide access to information associated with a valid library card under the following circumstances:

- Presentation of a patron's card,
- Provision of the card number or driver's license over the telephone,
- Presentation of the card number,
- Presentation of an official library notice, or
- Presentation of the photo identification necessary to obtain a library card.

¹As of September 1, 1993, the Texas Open Records Act protects the confidentiality of the records of any library system which is supported in whole or in part by public funds, that identify or serve to identify, a person who requested, obtained, or used a library material or service.

² The State of Texas defines a child (or minor) as anyone 16 years of age or younger.

Supporting Documentation

- [ALA Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records](#)
- [ALA Statement on Professional Ethics](#)
- [ALA Freedom to Read](#) and [ALA Freedom to View](#)
- [Complete Texas Open Records/Public Information Act](#)