

Effective Date: April 16, 2025

Patron Privacy Policy

The Sharon Public Library is committed to user confidentiality. The confidentiality of library records is a core part of library ethics and the Sharon Public Library follows the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association.

Confidentiality and your library record

Under the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 78, Section 7 “That part of the records of a public library which reveals the identity and intellectual pursuits of a person using such library shall not be a public record...”

Confidentiality extends to information sought or received, and materials consulted, borrowed, and includes database search records, reference interviews, circulation records, interlibrary loan transactions, registration records, and all other personally identifiable uses of library materials, facilities, or services.

Circulation, registration information, and information retrieval records may not be disclosed except to:

1. The cardholder (with card or other proper ID). NOTE: This is regardless of age or relationship. For example, parents cannot be told what materials a child has checked out without the child's consent.
2. Staff of the Old Colony Library Network, acting within the scope of their duties in the administration of the library system and in facilitating interlibrary loans.
3. Persons authorized by the cardholder to access the individual's records identified by a signed note of permission given by the cardholder.
4. Representatives of any local, state, or federal government, pursuant to subpoena or search warrant authorized under the authority of federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or investigative power. Upon receipt of any such subpoena or search warrant, the Library Director will consult with the Sharon Police Chief and/or the Town of Sharon's legal counsel to determine if the subpoena or search warrant is in proper form and if there is a valid basis for its issuance before providing confidential information.

The Library occasionally conducts promotional surveys to request information or to inform the community about services offered by the Library. The Library at those times, use patron emails or postal addresses for the library's internal mailing lists.

The Library does not sell, lease, or otherwise distribute or disclose patron name, email address, postal address, telephone number, or other personal information to outside parties.

When patrons visit the SPL website, the Library collects only information to measure the number of visitors to the site annually.

Web site data is separate from individual Library account data. The Library cannot look up patron Library records to determine what web sites were visited. The SPL also offers a wireless network that allows patrons to connect to the Internet inside and outside of the building. Please be aware that data accessed and sent over the SPL's wireless network is not encrypted.

Library information/Newsletter

If a patron initiates a reference inquiry, or subscribes to the Library's newsletter on the SPL web site, this information is considered as part of the borrower account and is protected as outlined above.

Online suggestions and other general email to the library that do not apply to borrowing or intellectual pursuits may be considered public records as per Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 66, Section 10.

Links to other websites

The SPL web-site contains links to external web sites not maintained by the Sharon Public Library. The Library cannot be responsible for user privacy when visiting outside web-sites.