BETHEL PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

POLICY NUMBER: 107
TITLE: Confidentiality of Library Records
DATE ISSUED: May 2009; November 2026

PURPOSE: To ensure that all records relating to patron registration and the subsequent use of and circulation by patrons of materials provided by the library are considered confidential in nature.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

1. The Board of Trustees recognizes the confidentiality of records related to circulation of library materials that contain the names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of the library in accordance with Pennsylvania law: 24 Pa. Cons. Stat. Sec. 4428.
2. The Board of Trustees supports the concept of intellectual freedom and the right of each citizen, regardless of age, to free access to information without fear of intimidation or recrimination. The library's confidentiality policy safeguards the first amendment and privacy rights of library users. The library advises employees, volunteers, and patrons that all library records that contain names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of the library are confidential. Staff are screened prior to hiring to ensure patron protection.
3. The Board of Trustees further subscribes to the American Library Association Library Code of Ethics, Section III, which states, "We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and materials consulted, borrowed, acquired, or transmitted."
4. In all instances and regardless of circumstances, Bethel Park Public Library safeguards access to patron library records and restricts access to that information to only the patron who owns the library card and provides that card or the parent/legal guardian of a minor child with the stipulation and exceptions specified below in section 7. No patron information will be sold or given to outside agencies.
5. No patron records will be made available to federal, state, or local law enforcement agencies except by a court order as required by law.
    a. Court orders from law enforcement officers will be referred to the Library Director who will consult legal counsel. Other library employees will not provide any patron records to law enforcement agencies under any circumstances.
    b. The library will take such action as is necessary to determine whether any court order or process issued by any court or pursuant to any court rule or any agency of government requires that such records be made available.
6. When a library employee speaks either in person, on the telephone or by electronic means to anybody other than the patron, or to persons who cannot produce their library card or other identification, any information regarding items charged out, overdue items, fines, or holds will be restricted to information that does not reveal the content, such as number of items or amount of fines owed.

Addresses, phone numbers, or any other personal information from a patron record will not be revealed.

7. The library record of a child has the same confidentiality protection under library policy as that of any other patron with the following exception:
    a. Parents or legal guardians are permitted access to the records of their minor children through the age of seventeen. The parent/legal guardian must be accompanied by the child, provide the child's library card or provide acceptable identification. In the case of telephone inquiries, library card number and verification of the child's address, telephone number, and date of birth are required.
    b. The library recognizes that parents or legal guardians who have signed their minor child's application have assumed the financial responsibility for materials charged out on their child's card therefore, parents or legal guardians will be provided with specific information about their minor child's library records when materials are overdue or lost.
8. All patrons are required to read and sign the patron agreement (Appendix I) that is printed on the library card registration form.

APPENDIX I

PATRON AGREEMENT

I agree to abide by all library policies, to pay fines and charges promptly and to report lost cards or address changes immediately.

_____

Signature (Parent/Legal guardian required if under 18) Date