

Barrington Public Library

Patron Privacy & Law Enforcement Request Policy

I. Purpose

The Barrington Public Library is committed to protecting the confidentiality of patron records as required under RSA 201-D:11 and related state and federal laws. This policy establishes the Library's legal and ethical obligations regarding patron privacy and outlines the authority and procedures for responding to requests from law enforcement agencies.

II. Policy Statement

1. Confidentiality of Records

The Library shall maintain the confidentiality of all records that identify library users, including circulation records, electronic resource use, reference inquiries, and any other personally identifiable information. Such records shall not be disclosed except as required by law.

2. Compliance with Applicable Law

The Library complies with:

- RSA 201-D:11 (confidentiality of library user records)
- The 2026 Privacy Policy & Parental Access to Minor Children Records (HB273 compliance)
- Federal laws governing search warrants and subpoenas, including the USA PATRIOT Act

3. Authority to Respond to Law Enforcement Requests

Only the following individuals are authorized to receive, review, or respond to law enforcement inquiries:

- The Library Director
- In the Director's absence, a duly sworn Library Trustee, preferably the Board President

No other staff member or volunteer is permitted to release information or respond to questions regarding patron records.

III. Procedures for Responding to Law Enforcement Requests

4. Verify Identification:

Confirm the identity and agency of the requesting officer using independently sourced contact information.

5. Request Legal Documentation:
Require presentation of a valid subpoena, court order, or search warrant before any patron information is released.
6. Consult Legal Counsel:
Forward all legal documents to municipal or library counsel for review prior to compliance.
7. Responding Without a Court Order:
If no court order is presented, the Director shall:
 - Explain the Library's confidentiality obligations
 - Decline to release information
 - Inform the officer that the Library will comply upon receipt of a valid order
8. Responding With a Valid Court Order:
Upon confirmation from legal counsel:
 - Release only the specific records identified in the order
 - Decline to provide any additional information not explicitly required
9. Protective Orders:
When appropriate, legal counsel may request a protective order limiting the use and disclosure of patron information.

IV. Search Warrants

10. Immediate Execution:
A valid search warrant must be executed immediately upon service. Officers may begin the search without delay.
11. Scope of Search:
The warrant must:
 - Be signed by a judge with jurisdiction
 - Identify the officer authorized to conduct the search
 - Specify the premises and materials to be seized
12. Library Responsibilities:
The Director or Trustee shall:
 - Request copies of the warrant and supporting affidavits
 - Document the search and items seized
 - Ensure that only materials listed in the warrant are taken
 - Notify legal counsel as soon as possible
13. Privileged Materials:
If privileged documents are encountered, the Director shall request that they be sealed and segregated pending legal review.

V. USA PATRIOT Act Compliance

If a request is made under the USA PATRIOT Act:

- A gag order may prohibit disclosure that records were sought or obtained.

APPROVED 05/19/2026

- Staff and Trustees may not be informed unless legally permitted.
- The Director may still consult legal counsel.

VI. Staff Training and Implementation

The Library Director shall ensure that all staff and volunteers receive training on:

- Patron privacy requirements
- Procedures for handling law enforcement inquiries
- Proper referral to authorized personnel

Operational procedures supporting this policy shall be maintained separately in the Staff Procedures Manual.

VII. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed at least every three years or upon changes to relevant state or federal law.