

Amesbury Public Library

Patron Privacy Policy

Policies & Procedures

The Amesbury Public Library is committed to user confidentiality. The confidentiality of library records is a core part of library ethics and the Amesbury 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 or 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 identification). 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 Amesbury Public Library and staff of other MVLC member libraries acting within the scope of their duties in the administration of the library system and in facilitating loans.
3. 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. To the best of his/her ability, upon receipt of any such subpoena or search warrant, the Library Director will consult with 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 campaigns to inform the community of our services. The Library at those times may use patron email or postal address 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.

Confidentiality and our website

When patrons visit the APL website, the Library collects and stores only information to measure the number of visitors to different areas of the site to assist in making the site more useful to you. The information includes:

- the address (IP) of the patron's computer or Internet provider
- the date and time the patron accessed our site
- the pages that are accessed and how patrons navigate the site
- the Internet address of the website that referred the patron to the Library's site

Website data are separate from individual library account data. The Library cannot look up patron library records to determine what websites were visited.

The APL also offers a wireless network that allows patrons to connect to the Internet at any of APL's locations. Please be aware that data accessed and sent over the APL's wireless network is not encrypted.

Cookies

A cookie is a small data file written to a computer's hard drive. They are generated by websites to provide users with a personalized and often simplified online experience. The Library website does not employ cookies. Certain third party database services linked on our site, such as APL's subscription databases will generate and store cookies on user's computer's hard drives if users engage in such services. If users choose not to accept the cookies generated by such third party database applications, they will not be able to use some of those services online; use of the remainder of the Library website will not be affected. Be assured that cookies, by themselves, cannot be used to reveal or discover the identity of the individual user nor are they collected or stored on any Amesbury Public Library server. Acceptance of any third party database cookie on this site will not compromise patron anonymity while using our website.

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.

If patrons leave the APL site

The APL website contains links to external websites not maintained by the Amesbury Public Library. The Library cannot be responsible for user privacy when visiting outside websites. Please consult the privacy policies of those websites should there be questions regarding their use.