

Des Moines Public Library

Confidentiality of Library Registration and Circulation Records

It is the policy of the library board to protect, as far as possible, the privacy of customers who use the library and not to make inquiry into the purpose for which a customer requests information. Staff members shall not under any circumstances ever give a third party information about what a library customer is reading or requesting from the library's collection. Information will be provided over the telephone to card holders who verify their identity by providing personal identification such as a PIN or library card barcode number.

Library personnel shall be aware that all library registration, circulation and reference records must remain confidential and are protected by library policy and under state law (Code of Iowa Section 22.7)

Information concerning a customer's registration record (including whether or not he or she has a card), circulation records and reference questions asked shall not be made available to any citizen, agency or state, federal or local government authority.

A staff member receiving a request to examine or obtain information relating to customer records shall immediately refer the person making the request to the Library Director who shall explain the confidentiality policy.

Subpoenas for information shall be referred to the Library Director.

Chapter 22.7 Confidential records. *Code of Iowa 1999*

"The following public records shall be kept confidential, unless otherwise ordered by a court, by the lawful custodian of the records, or by another person duly authorized to release such information: ...

13. The records of a library which, by themselves or when examined with other public records, would reveal the identity of the library patron checking out or requesting an item or information from the library. The records shall be released to a criminal or juvenile justice agency only pursuant to an investigation of a particular person or organization suspected of committing a known crime. The records shall be released only upon a judicial determination that a rational connection exists between the requested release of information and a legitimate end and that the need for the information is cogent and compelling.

14. The material of a library, museum or archive which has been contributed by a private person to the extent of any limitation that is a condition of the contribution.”

Policy Interpretation as it applies to parents and guardians of minors:

- The Library Director is designated by the Library Board of Trustees as the “lawful custodian” of library records.
- As the lawful custodian, the Library Director has directed staff to provide a parent or guardian with any information about a minor child’s record only when the parent or guardian provides the child’s bar code number or presents the child’s card to the staff member in charge. A minor child is defined as a person under 18 years of age
- If they have the child’s bar code number, a parent or guardians may list what is checked out on a child’s card by calling *Libby*, the library’s automated customer information system at 283-4000. A second option, if they have the child’s barcode and PIN number is to make an inquiry on the online catalog. The library will only provide the parent or guardian with a minor child’s PIN number only if the parent or guardian comes to the library and presents the child’s library card to the staff person in charge.
- The library cannot ensure privacy of circulation records during the process of collecting overdue materials.
- The library cannot ensure privacy of personal or circulation records when engaging third party companies or consortiums in circulation functions, such as downloadable e-books, merchant services in credit card/debit card transactions, etc.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, July 16, 1970

Modified November 14, 2000

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, November 20, 2012

Modified May 16, 2017