



## **PETERSBURGH PUBLIC LIBRARY CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

### **POLICY:**

The New York State Confidentiality Law protects the privacy rights of users of the Petersburgh Public Library. This law prohibits the release of any information possessed by the Library including all electronic and paper files or records.

The Law prohibits the release of any information that connects the name of a Petersburgh Public Library user to their email address or social media sites; their telephone numbers or mailing addresses; records of Library materials used or checked out (including all books, magazines, and electronic media); and to questions directed to Library personnel. In other words, all information about our patrons is private and should not be conveyed to anyone except as noted below. The prohibition on the release of information about the Library's patrons also applies to any of the Town of Petersburgh's elected or appointed officials. And, this prohibition applies to any candidate for office in the Town of Petersburgh, or to a candidate for office at any other governmental level (e.g., county, state, federal elected positions).

Here are the exceptions:

Library staff is directed to release information concerning a specific Patron at that Patron's own request. In the case of a telephone call or email from a Patron, Library staff should use their discretion and good judgment to ensure that the request is legitimate and that there is no question about the identification of the requestor.

The parent or legal guardian of a minor may request information about their own children's records of overdue materials to enable the payment of fines, but they are prohibited from receiving specific information about the types of materials used by that minor. In other words, the Library usage patterns of a minor patron is protected information.

Library staff shall comply with any lawful order from a Court, or in response to a subpoena from a Court of Law. Information about one of our Patrons shall not be released to any law enforcement official in the absence of a Court order or subpoena.

Examples to illustrate how this policy should be implemented by Library personnel:

1. A Library patron seeks a book that is checked out. S/he asks who currently has the book. Library personnel are prohibited from disclosing that information.
2. A Library patron calls the Library to ask if any of their books are currently overdue. Library staff may disclose this information if they are certain of the Patron's identity.
3. A New York State Trooper comes into the Library and asks for the address or telephone number of a Library patron. Library personnel are prohibited from disclosing that information in the absence of a Court Order or subpoena.

Guidance:

In interpreting and implementing this policy, Library staff are directed to give deference to the intent of this policy: Namely, to protect the privacy of our Patrons. If any doubt arises as to the appropriate response to a request for information, Library staff should first confer with the Director, and the Director should consult with the Board of Trustees if necessary to receive specific guidance. This consultation should occur prior to releasing any potentially protected information.

**APPROVED DATE: April 1, 2014**

**REVISED DATE: December 5, 2018**