Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Privacy Statement

Amarillo Public Library (APL) is committed to protecting the privacy of its patrons, as guided by the following statement in the American Library Association's Code of Ethics: "We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired, or transmitted."

Library Records

Library records are defined as any information about a patron's account, including, but not limited to: information provided by a patron to APL; any information linking a patron to a specific library resource, subject category of library resources, or library program; and any other personally identifiable information.

The permission to pick up holds does not extend generally as permission to disclose other circulation information about the patron.

Neither the library's circulation system nor the staff keep information about previously borrowed materials, unless there's a fine or other fee associated with the item(s). Hold requests are retained in the system until picked up or cancelled.

The library does not retain program attendance records, security camera footage, or other identifiable information beyond a record's required retention period or what is reasonably necessary for the operation of the library.

Release of Library Records

Library records are confidential. Except as otherwise provided in this policy, library records will only be released to the cardholder, the cardholder's authorized representative, or the parent or legal guardian listed on a minor's account, and only after the requester's identity is verified.

Library records will not be released to any third party without the user's permission, except under court order, subpoena, or warrant, as outlined by the state statute, Texas Government Code, Section 552.124, as well as the surveillance provisions included in the USA PATRIOT ACT (Public Law 107-56).

The Director of Library Services is custodian of library records and is authorized to receive or comply with public records requests or inquiries from law enforcement officers and the general public. The Director may delegate this authority to designated members of APL's management team. The Director may confer with the City of Amarillo's Legal department before determining the proper response to any law enforcement or public request for records. Requests under the Texas Public Information Act will be

handled in accordance with Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code. APL staff are trained to refer any law enforcement inquiries to the Director or other members of the management team.

Library records may be disclosed if the administrative staff determines that disclosure is reasonably necessary for the operation of the library or library system, and the records are not confidential under other state or federal law.

Patron Responsibility

Patrons are responsible for keeping their information accurate and up-to-date. It is also the patron's responsibility to notify APL immediately if the patron's card is lost or stolen or if the patron believes someone else is using the patron's card or card number and PIN without permission. APL encourages patrons to safeguard their library cards and PINs. APL staff will not provide a patron's PIN over the phone or via email; requests for this information must be made in person, and ID is required.

Third-Party Vendor Services

APL enters into agreements with third parties to provide online services, digital collections, streaming content, and website improvements. These services may also connect with social networks.

Third-party services may gather and disclose patron information including:

- Personally identifiable information that patrons knowingly provide such as website registration, feedback and suggestions, requests for information, or shared content creation;
- Other information that could be used to identify patrons such as IP addresses, search history, location-based data, and device IDs;
- Non-personally identifiable information such as ad views, analytics, browser information (type and language), cookie data, date and time of requests, demographic data, hardware and software types, interaction data, serving domains, page views, and web pages visited immediately prior to visiting the APL website; and
- Other data as described in a vendor's privacy policy and terms of use.

APL makes reasonable efforts to ensure that its contracts and licenses reflect APL's policies and legal obligations concerning patron privacy and confidentiality. When connecting to third-party licensed database providers and content providers, APL only releases information that authenticates registered APL patrons. Patrons must understand that when accessing remote or third-party vendor sites, there are limits to the privacy protection that APL can provide. APL encourages patrons to review the privacy policies of all third-party providers.

Protection does not extend to external applications or websites that may be accessed through APL's public access Internet computers or WiFi.

Illegal Activity Prohibited and Not Protected

Patrons may conduct only legal activity while using library resources and services. Nothing in this policy prevents the library from exercising its right to enforce its Rules of Conduct for Patrons; protect its facilities, library staff and volunteers, other library patrons, network and equipment from harm; or prevent the use of library facilities and equipment for illegal purposes.

The library can electronically monitor public computers and external access to its network and reserves the right to do so when a violation of law or library policy is suspected. APL employees are authorized to take immediate action to protect the security of library patrons, staff, facilities, computers, and the network. This includes contacting law enforcement authorities and providing information that may identify the individual(s) perpetrating a violation, to the extent permitted by law.

Data Security

We take appropriate measures to protect the personal information we collect from unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction. However, no method of transmission over the Internet, or method of electronic storage, is completely secure.

APL cannot provide any information about users of reciprocal partner libraries in the Harrington Library Consortium.

Enforcement and Redress

Patrons with questions, concerns, or complaints about the handling of their personally identifying information or this policy may file written comments with the Director of Library Services. A response will be sent in a timely manner, and when appropriate APL's administrative staff may conduct an investigation or review of practices and procedures. APL conducts such reviews as necessary to ensure compliance with the principles outlined in this policy.

Approved by the Library Advisory Board on October 26, 2026.