

POLICY MANUAL	Section No. : OP - 02
	Effective Date: November 17, 2008
	Review Date(s):
	Revision Date(s): December 22, 2016; January 16, 2017; October 19, 2020; October 18, 2021; May 26, 2025
SECTION : Operational	
SUBJECT : Patron Records Policy	Page 1 of 2

Purpose

To outline Welland Public Library's approach to patron records and account with respect to the safeguarding of patron information.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, library customers, and third-party contractors.

Responsibility

The CEO or designate is responsible for the overall administration of this policy. All staff are responsible for understanding and applying the policy consistently.

Core Principles

The Welland Public Library respects and maintains the privacy of all library patrons, including minors, and will treat all library patrons' transactions and records confidentially. Records and information held by the Library shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Public Libraries Act R.S.O. 1999, Chapter 44 and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990.

Information is collected by authorized, on-duty employees for the purposes of member registration, circulation of Library materials and the continual improvement of library service delivery. All information contained in or developed from the Library's database that pertains to membership and borrowing records is kept strictly confidential.

Circulation Records

Records of materials borrowed from the Library are not retained on patron accounts beyond the time materials are returned, unless the patron has enabled this feature on an opt-in basis or there are unresolved fees on the patron's account per the Purging Schedule on the following page.

When records of materials borrowed are retained, the information can only be disclosed to the person who is the owner of the card, the guardian of the owner of the account, and/or to law enforcement with a proper and valid warrant.

Patron information from Internet log-ins are stored locally for troubleshooting purposes. The total number of uses will also be retained for statistical purposes.

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Patron Registration Records

To obtain a library card, patrons must disclose their legal name and current address to library employees.

Upon presentation of a library membership card or other sufficient identification as outlined in the Library's Lending Policy, patrons may query their records or the records of minors under their care. Library staff will not release their account information to anyone other than the member (or parent/guardian in the case of minors) even upon presentation of proper identification or a valid Library card. Requests for information about cardholders belonging to other Libraries in Niagara Cooperative (LiNC) systems will be referred to the CEO of their home system.

In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, personal information from the Library's database files shall only be released to a law enforcement agency in Canada upon the presentation of a proper and valid warrant.

Purging Schedule

- Records of items with outstanding fees/charges are retained until paid. A historical record of items with fees/charges that have been paid is available only to authorized, on-duty library employees.
- Internal notes regarding incidents that require follow-up action from staff, such as a temporary ban on Internet privileges, will be purged upon resolution of the incident.
- Backup files of customers' borrowing activity are temporarily retained offsite by the host provider for the purpose of restoring data, in case of system failure and file corruption.
- Personal records of all customers who have not used their cards in the previous four (4) years and do not have outstanding fines are purged on an annual basis.

