

Confidentiality of Library Records

Watkins Glen Public Library

Confidentiality of library records is necessary to protect our First Amendment rights, a core value of libraries of all types. Without confidentiality about our viewing and reading, our freedom to view and read constitutionally protected speech is curbed and strength as a democratic institution is diminished.

In keeping with the Consolidated Laws of New York State and the core values of librarianship, the library will hold all library records and inquiries confidential.

Civil Practice Laws and Rules, Sec. 4509 states:

“Library records, which contain names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of public, free association, school, college and university libraries and library systems of this state, including but not limited to records related to the circulation of library materials, computer database searches, interlibrary loan transactions, reference queries, requests for photocopies of library materials, title reserve requests, or the use of audio-visual materials, films or records, shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except that such records may be disclosed to the extent necessary for the proper operation of such library and shall be disclosed upon request or consent of the user or pursuant to subpoena, court order or where otherwise required by statute.”

The library collects only that personally identifiable information about patrons that is necessary to ensure the proper operation of the Library and otherwise required for access to Library resources or participation in Library functions, including, but not limited to, the use of the website.

For people to make full and effective use of library resources, they must feel unconstrained by the possibility that others may become aware of the books they read, the materials they use or the questions they ask. Therefore, the library’s Board of Trustees have adopted the following guidelines. No information will be disclosed regarding, or including:

1. A patron’s name (or whether an individual is a registered borrower or has been)
2. A patron’s address
3. A patron’s phone number
4. A patron’s borrowing records
5. The number or character of questions asked by a patron
6. The frequency or content of a patron’s visits to the library

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees on 03/10/2026.