

Thomas Memorial Library--Confidentiality Policy

In an age of increasing concerns about the privacy of individuals' records, the Thomas Memorial Library is committed to safeguarding all borrowers' records to the extent the law allows. The ethical responsibilities of librarians, the [Maine State Statute regarding public library records](#), and the United States Constitution protect the privacy of library users.

It is the responsibility of all library staff to protect the privacy of the library's circulation records and registration materials identifying the names of library users with regard to specific materials. Access to such records will be given only to the borrower him or herself, and to staff who need to access the records for library purposes. Exceptions to this policy will be granted only with the express written permission of the patron involved, or as a result of a court order. This policy is in keeping with the [Maine State Revised Statute, title 27, section 21](#) that states:

"Records maintained by any public municipal library, including the Maine State Library, which contain information relating to the identity of a library patron relative to the patron's use of books or other materials at the library, shall be confidential. Those records may only be released with the express written permission of the patron involved or as the result of a court order. Public municipal libraries shall have up to 5 years from the effective date of this chapter to be in compliance with this section." 1983, c. 208.

In accordance with the [ALA Code of Ethics](#), confidentiality extends to "information sought or received, and materials consulted, borrowed, or acquired," and includes database search records, interlibrary loan records, and other personally identifiable uses of library materials, facilities, or services. Parents should be aware that, since juvenile patron records are not specifically exempted in this statute, in keeping with the [Library Bill of Rights](#), the [library trustees](#) have interpreted the statute to cover all patron records without exception.