
APPLICABILITY:

The Privacy Policy applies to all Durham County Library users.

PURPOSE:

Library patrons' right to privacy is a core principle of librarianship and is articulated in North Carolina state law, which provides for the confidentiality of library records. The Privacy Policy describes the information collected and not collected from Library patrons and how long it is stored.

POLICY:

When individuals sign up for a Durham County Library account, we collect this information:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Wireless carrier (if the borrower wants to receive text message notifications)
- Email address (optional; used for notifications and other library communications)
- Date of birth

The patron is assigned a barcode (the number shown on the library card) and a borrower number (used by our catalog software). During the card registration process, users will choose a four-digit PIN.

Most cardholders' accounts remain in the system as long as they are active. An account becomes inactive when it has not been used in three years and there are no outstanding fees attached. At that point, it is deleted from our system. Patrons wishing to discontinue their account may contact the Library to request deletion. Accounts for individuals who are banned from Durham County Library are not deleted.

An account also includes items the cardholder currently has checked out, holds, active ILL requests, and fee history. By default, once the patron returns an item, it will be removed from their view and the Library staff view of their account unless there is a fee attached. A history of any related notices the cardholder was sent will be available to Library staff for up to 90 days and then deleted. A record of each checkout will also be stored behind the scenes in our troubleshooting database for three years. Library staff do not have regular access to it there, but system administrators are able to access it when legally required. After that time, the checkout record will be fully anonymized so that it is no longer connected with specific accounts.

Patrons can opt in to having their borrowing history saved. [Learn more about borrowing history options.](#)

If a patron pays for a fee via credit card, the Library keeps a record of the transaction for one year but never sees or stores their credit card number or other card details. During all in-person and online credit card transactions, data is transmitted via industry-standard encryption.

Third-party vendors, such as OverDrive/Libby and Midwest Tape/hoopla, may keep a separate record of patrons' borrowing history with them – see below for more information.

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL STATUTES:

Account information is protected by the North Carolina General Statutes, which include an article on the confidentiality of library user records. The relevant text states:

Chapter 125. Libraries. Article 3. Library Records.

§ 125-18. Definitions.

As used in this Article, unless the context requires otherwise:

(1) "Library" means a library established by the State; a county, city, township, village, school district, or other local unit of government or authority or combination of local units of governments and authorities; community college or university; or any private library open to the public.

(2) "Library record" means a document, record, or other method of storing information retained by a library that identifies a person as having requested or obtained specific information or materials from a library. "Library record" does not include nonidentifying material that may be retained for the purpose of studying or evaluating the circulation of library materials in general. (1985, c. 486, s. 2.)

§ 125-19. Confidentiality of library user records.

(a) Disclosure. – A library shall not disclose any library record that identifies a person as having requested or obtained specific materials, information, or services, or as otherwise having used the library, except as provided for in subsection (b).

(b) Exceptions. – Library records may be disclosed in the following instances:

(1) When necessary for the reasonable operation of the library;

(2) Upon written consent of the user; or

(3) Pursuant to subpoena, court order, or where otherwise required by law. (1985, c. 486, s. 2.)

In summary, these statutes mean that the Library only discloses your borrower information when requested by you or required by law. This applies to questions you ask and programs you attend as well as items you check out.

MINORS:

Durham County Library's commitment to customers' privacy also includes that of children who use the Library. The Library asks parents or guardians who need access to their child's account to use the child's library card or barcode and PIN.

Durham Public Schools (DPS) students have access to Durham County Library (DCoL) via their DPS student ID (SLAM ID). The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Durham County and DPS includes a section on the confidentiality of student records, which states that any “personally identifiable student information” that the library obtains “shall be subject to the confidentiality and disclosure provisions of applicable federal and state statutes and regulations, and DPS policies [...] DCoL agrees that it shall solely use such student information for the purpose of providing eCard access to DCoL databases and electronic materials services pursuant to this MOU. DCoL further agrees that it shall limit access to only those employees or agents with a need to access such student information, and that it shall not re-disclose this information to any other party for any reason.”

VENDORS AND THIRD-PARTY SERVICES:

Durham County Library works with third-party vendors to provide many digital collections and other online services. The vendors the Library works with agree not to sell or share patrons’ information. Beyond that, the privacy policy for each of these services is set by the vendor, and Durham County Library is not responsible for their use of patrons’ information. Some of those policies are linked here, although this list is not comprehensive.

The Library’s catalog and account services are provided by [Innovative Interfaces Incorporated](#) and [BiblioCommons](#).

These vendors provide digital items (such as ebooks and e-audio) that may be included in our catalog. If patrons check out one of those items, the vendor will retain that information as part of their borrowing history with them:

- [OverDrive](#). In addition to the information OverDrive collects about all checkouts, some OverDrive items are offered in the Kindle ebook format. To check out a Kindle item, patrons have to use an Amazon account and their usage of that item will be tracked by Amazon.
- [hoopla](#)

These vendors provide other online resources, such as databases of articles or online classes. Some may require patrons to create an account for access to the following resources:

- [Ancestry](#)
- [Brainfuse](#)
- [EBSCO](#)
- [Gale](#)
- [LearningExpress](#)
- [LinkedIn Learning](#)
- [New York Times](#)
- [NewsBank](#)
- [ProQuest](#)

Other services:

- [Springshare](#) (provides LibCal, used for event registration and meeting room reservations, and LibAnswers, used for online ask-a-librarian chat and email forms).

OUR WEBSITE AND PUBLIC TECHNOLOGY:

Website and Catalog

When individuals use the Durham County Library's website, information about their visit is automatically collected by the Library's computer servers and by website analytics software. This information lets the Library measure the use of the site for troubleshooting purposes and to help improve the site. The information collected is in no way tied to patrons' accounts. It includes:

- IP address
- Browser, operating system, and device type
- Location
- The date and time of the website visit
- The pages viewed on the website
- Search terms used
- If the individual followed a link to our website, the URL of the site containing the link

The Library website uses cookies, which are small files that are sent to a browser by a website and can transmit personal information. The Library's catalog and some vendor resources use cookies to verify authorized users. Individuals can change the privacy settings of their browsers to refuse to accept cookies, but this may mean that they are unable to use some of the Library's online services.

When patrons use the Library catalog through BiblioCommons, they have the option of creating what that service refers to as "Shared Content" – this includes things like ratings or reviews of items. Shared Content is publicly visible by default, although some of it can be set as private instead. Creating Shared Content is entirely optional and is not required to use the catalog. Learn more in the [BiblioCommons privacy policy](#).

Public Computing

To use one of our public computers, a patron logs on using their library card number. We do not keep a record of activities during the session, such as browsing history, cookies, bookmarks, or downloads. The session data is automatically deleted from the computer after the patron logs out. The Library does, however, keep a record that the patron logged on to that computer. As with other account information, the Library discloses computer login history only when requested by the patron or required by law. For minors, only the parent or guardian on record can request this information. To request a minor's computer login history, the parent or guardian needs to provide proof of identity through photo identification, as well as the barcode number of the child's account.

Our printer system keeps a log of print jobs including the computer used to print, cost of the job, and timestamp. The logs do not contain customer information and are deleted periodically.

Your use of our public Wi-Fi network is not tracked.

If a patron checks out a wireless hotspot, the only information the Library receives about its use is total data usage. Our same policies for deleting checkout info after items are returned also apply to hotspot checkouts.

Our wireless hotspots transmit data via the T-Mobile network and are subject to the T-Mobile privacy policy. Because the hotspot program is an opt-in service, T-Mobile is not bound by the Library's patron privacy policies. They may track data including browsing and search history. The Library does not provide patron information to T-Mobile.

Other Information Submitted

Patrons may submit additional information to the Library while using specific library services, such as questions asked of Library staff, reading recommendation requests, Interlibrary Loan requests, purchase requests, event registrations, and meeting room reservations. Records of these interactions are deleted when no longer needed for library operations.

Durham County Library is subject to North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 132. Public Records. Any messages sent to Library staff via email (including form submissions on the Library website) will be kept by Durham County according to public records retention schedules. The Library Records statute listed above means that information considered to be confidential library records will not be subject to public records requests, and this includes information sent via email.

Video Surveillance

Some Library locations have security cameras installed to improve safety for customers and staff. Surveillance footage is governed by the County Security Manager, and any requests for access must go through that office.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all Library staff to understand this policy fully and to protect customer privacy by adhering to its requirements. Library staff will access customer information only for the purpose of providing library services.

Staff are required to direct all requests for customer data, including by law enforcement officials, to the Library Director. Decisions about releasing customer data are made exclusively by the Library Director in consultation with the County Legal Department.

It is the responsibility of the Library Information Technology Manager and Deputy Director, with

the advice of the Board of Trustees, to interpret, monitor, and recommend updates to this policy. The Library Director is the final authority regarding enforcing this policy.