
SECTION 6: PATRON CONFIDENTIALITY

The Austin County Library System (ACLS) recognizes its responsibility to protect the privacy of each patron's personal records relating to their use of library materials. We affirm patrons' Freedom to Read, as set forth by the American Library Association (Attachment 3).

Records are required for controlling the use of library materials both on and off the library premises. These records are not in any way intended for the purpose of monitoring a user's reading or pursuit of information. Circulation records are kept to protect public property. Summary statistics of library use are kept to measure organizational activity.

Library commitment to privacy and confidentiality has deep roots not only in the law, but also in the ethics and practices of librarianship. In accordance with 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."

In accordance with Texas Government Code Section 552.124 of the Public Information Act addressing Records of a library or Library System and the surveillance provisions included in The USA PATRIOT ACT (Public Law 107-56), Austin County Library System protects the privacy of library patrons by prohibiting access to patron information by third parties.

Information about library materials on loan, reserve, or used in the library, as well as personal information is restricted to the cardholder and will not be disclosed to a third party except:

- As reasonably necessary for the operation of the library;
- To persons authorized in writing by an adult patron and in possession of that patron's library card; or
- To a law enforcement agency or a prosecutor under a district court order or subpoena in accordance with Texas Government Code Section 552.124.

Information that can be provided to parents upon presentation of their child's library card, to an authorized person as stated above, or by telephone to patrons who provide the name and library card number:

- The number of items on loan and the due dates.
- Number of books on hold.
- Fines and fees due on the account.
- Due date information about specific items when the titles are provided by the requestor.

Austin County Library System Policy Manual

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The following policies govern how we use our library.

User Access and Responsibility

Library patrons are entitled to view their personally identifiable information and are responsible for keeping their information accurate and up to date. The library will explain the process for accessing or updating patron information.

Data Integrity and Security

ACLS takes reasonable steps to assure data integrity. We protect personally identifiable information by electronically purging or manually shredding data once it is no longer needed for library business purposes. We have invested in appropriate technology to protect the security of any personally identifiable information while it is in the library's custody.

Parents and Children

ACLS respects the privacy and confidentiality of all library users, no matter their age. Parents or guardians of a child under age 18 who wish to access their child's library records will have to provide the child's library card or card number and the child will have to give their consent for their parent to access their records. This is according to the law.

Staff Access to Personal Data

Library staff may access personal data stored in the library's computer system only for the purpose of performing their assigned library duties. Staff will not disclose any personal data collected from patrons to any other party except where required by law or to fulfill your service requests. The library does not sell, lease or give users' personal information to companies, governmental agencies or individuals except as required by law or with the user's authorization.

Illegal Activity Prohibited and Not Protected

Users may conduct only legal activity while using library resources and services. Nothing in this statement prevents the library from exercising its right to enforce its policies, protect its facilities, and 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. Staff is authorized to take immediate action to protect the security of library

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users, staff, facilities, computers and the network. This includes contacting law enforcement authorities and providing information that may identify the individual(s) perpetrating a violation.



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