

The Etna Library

Confidentiality of Patron Records

The Etna Library protects all patrons' right to privacy.

The Etna Library complies with New Hampshire law RSA 202 D:11 which states that individual library records are confidential and shall only be revealed to the card holder, to someone with the card holder's consent, or disclosed to the extent necessary for the proper operation of the library.

The information patrons give the library when applying for a card, even the fact that they are library card holders, is confidential, as are all records of patrons' use of library materials and services.

The law applies to all borrowers, regardless of age.

COMPUTER USE:

The Etna Library does not retain records of patrons' use of the Etna Library's computers, or of the internet. We make every effort to ensure that patron privacy is protected.

REFERENCE SERVICES:

Reference services are protected by RSA 202 D:11 and the Etna Library's privacy policy.

CHILDREN AND PRIVACY:

New Hampshire's library records privacy law (RSA 202 D:11) protects the privacy of all borrowers, including children, regardless of their age. The records of children who have their own library cards are subject to the same privacy restrictions as the records of adult borrowers, and the library is not able to share those records with others, including parents. (In 2001 and 2003 bills were introduced in the State House to specifically allow the release of minors' records to their parents. Both bills failed.)

Parents who want their children to have their own library cards need to know that the library won't be able to share with them information about their child's records, including titles of checkouts, holds, renewals, overdues and fines, and other library services.

Patrons do have control over the privacy of their own records, however, and families may make their own decisions about the amount of privacy they wish to maintain within their own families. For instance, parents may decide to hold their children's cards for them, may keep all family members' lists of borrowed materials on the family bulletin board, or may use family members'

cards to access the family's patron records via the library's web site. The distinction lies in the difference between what the library staff can legally do and the choices that families are free to make for themselves.

NH RSA 201-D:11 Library User Records; Confidentiality

- I. Library records which contain the names or other personal identifying information regarding the users of public or other than public libraries shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except as provided in paragraph II. Such records include, but are not limited to, library, information system, and archival records related to the circulation and use of library materials or services.
- II. Records described in paragraph I may be disclosed to the extent necessary for the proper operation of such libraries and shall be disclosed upon request by or consent of the user or pursuant to subpoena, court order, or where otherwise required by statute.
- III. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any library from releasing statistical information and other data regarding the circulation of use of library materials provided, however, that the identity of the users of such library materials shall be considered confidential and shall not be disclosed to the general public except as provided in paragraph II.