Wolcott Public Library

# Confidentiality of Library Records Policy

## Purpose

Wolcott Public Library protects the privacy and confidentiality of everyone who uses the library. This policy states the library's obligations under New York Civil Practice Law and Rules (CPLR) § 4509, which makes library records confidential, and describes how the library applies that obligation to the records it keeps, the requests it receives, and the systems and vendors it uses. It applies to every trustee, employee, and volunteer who has access to a library record, and to every record the library creates or maintains that identifies a patron's use of the library, regardless of format.

This policy reflects the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Article VII, which recognizes a right to privacy and confidentiality in library use for every patron, regardless of age, background, or the reason for their visit.

## Confidential Library Records

Under CPLR § 4509, a library record is any record that contains a patron's name or other identifying information connected to that patron's use of library materials, services, or facilities. Examples include circulation records, computer and internet use, reference and research assistance, interlibrary loan requests, database searches, and reservation of library materials.

Wolcott Public Library treats any record that indicates a specific individual's use of library services or library facilities as a confidential library record, unless this policy or another library policy specifically states otherwise.

A confidential library record may not be disclosed except in the circumstances CPLR § 4509 allows: with the patron's consent, to the extent necessary for the

proper operation of the library, or pursuant to subpoena, court order, or another statute that specifically requires disclosure.

Only staff members and volunteers who need access to a specific library record to do their jobs may access it. The Director does not grant broader access to library records than a person's duties require.

## Requests from Law Enforcement and Other Third Parties

Wolcott Public Library does not disclose a confidential library record to a law enforcement officer, attorney, government agency, or any other third party except with the patron's consent or pursuant to a subpoena, court order, or other statute that specifically requires disclosure.

Only the Director, or the Director's designee in the Director's absence, is authorized to respond to a request for a confidential library record from law enforcement or any other third party. A staff member or volunteer who receives such a request refers the requester to the Director and does not confirm, deny, or discuss any patron's use of the library.

If a genuine and immediate threat to a person's health or life exists, the Director may disclose the minimum information necessary to address that threat, in coordination with law enforcement or emergency responders as appropriate.

## Retention and Disposal of Library Records

Wolcott Public Library keeps a confidential library record only as long as necessary for the operation of the library or as required by law.

## Technology Systems and Vendors

Wolcott Public Library uses computer systems, software, and vendor services to manage library operations and deliver library services. Any system or vendor that collects, stores, or processes a confidential library record is subject to this policy and to the library's obligations under CPLR § 4509 and New York's SHIELD Act (General Business Law § 899-bb).

Before the library begins using a new system or vendor service that will handle a confidential library record, the Director confirms that the library's written

agreement with the vendor limits the vendor's use of that record to the service the library has contracted for, and prohibits the vendor from sharing the record with any other party except as this policy allows.

## Records in the Integrated Library System (ILS)

The library's use of the OWWL Library System's Integrated Library System (ILS) is governed by the OWWL Library System's Systems Access and Confidentiality of Library Records Policy. Each Wolcott Public Library authorized user who accesses the ILS does so through an individual, unique account, and complies with that policy's requirements for account access, password security, device use, and data handling. Every employee and volunteer who accesses the ILS also completes the training that policy requires.

The ILS holds records belonging to patrons of all 42 OWWL Library System member libraries, not only Wolcott Public Library's own patrons. To help protect that shared body of records, Wolcott Public Library secures the library records it creates and accesses in a manner consistent with all applicable OWWL Library System policies and New York State law.

## Additional Local Records

Wolcott Public Library maintains additional records, beyond those described above, that may identify a patron or a patron's use of the library. For each, the library states below whether the record is confidential under CPLR § 4509 and, if so, who may access it and how long the library retains it.

- Program and class sign-up sheets: Confidential. Access limited to the staff member running the program. Retained for 1 year, then destroyed.
- Meeting room reservation forms: Confidential. Access limited to the staff member processing the reservation. Retained consistent with the Local Government Records Schedule (LGS-1) for facility-use records.
- Patron complaint forms: Confidential as to the identity of the person filing the complaint. Access limited to the Director. Retained consistent with LGS-1.
- Proctoring service sign-up and test records: Confidential. Access limited to the staff member administering the service. Retained only as long as needed to complete the proctoring service, then destroyed.

## Review

The board reviews this policy every five years, consistent with 8 NYCRR § 90.2, or sooner if a change in law or in the library's recordkeeping practices requires it.

*Approved by the Wolcott Public Library Board of Trustees on 9-16-2026.*