

# GERING PUBLIC LIBRARY PRIVACY POLICY

## Purpose of the Policy

To protect the reading interests of library patrons by making confidential all registration and circulation records.

## Confidentiality of Records

The Gering Public Library specifically recognizes that library records and patron information are confidential. Library records are defined as a record in any form that is maintained by the library and that contains any of the following types of information:

- Information an individual is required to provide in order to be eligible to use library services or borrow materials.
- Information that identifies or is provided by an individual as having requested or obtained specific materials or materials on a specific subject.

Information that does not identify an individual and that is retained for the purpose of studying or evaluating the use of the library is not considered confidential and is not subject to this policy.

Library records shall not be made available to any agency of federal, state, or local government, or to any spouse or other individual, except as pursuant to the following:

- For the records of the Panhandle Library Consortium, in which we are a member.
- For the records of children under the age of 16 years old when requested by parents, guardians, or custodians.
- In accordance with a subpoena, search warrant, or other court order, or to a law enforcement officer who is investigating a matter involving public safety in exigent circumstances.
- At the written request or with the written consent of the individual who is the subject of the record or information.
- In an effort by the library to reclaim items overdue for more than ninety days.

When library staff speak either in person or on the telephone to anybody other than the patron or to persons who cannot produce their library card numbers and provide other identification, information regarding items charged out, items overdue, fines, holds will be restricted as to information that does not reveal the content. Addresses, phone numbers, or any other personal information from patron's records will not be given out under the above circumstances. When a patron is unable to confirm his or her identify as required, a printout of the requested information may be mailed to the patron using the mailing address provided in the library's registration records.

The library record of a child has the same confidentiality protection under library policy as that of any other patrons with the following exceptions:

- Parents or legal guardians are permitted access to the records of their children under the age of 16 years old. The parent/legal guardian must be accompanied by the child, provide the child's library card, and/or provide other acceptable identification. In the case of telephone inquiries, library card number and verification of the child's address, telephone number, and date of birth are required.
- Parents or legal guardians of children ages 16 through 17 years old are permitted to know only the number of items, not titles, authors, or subjects, charged out on their children's library cards, unless the child accompanies the parent or legal guardian to the library and grants permission for access. The parent or legal guardian must provide the children's library card or, in the case of telephone inquiries, library card number and verification of the child's address, telephone number, and date of birth.

Gering Public Library recognizes that parents or legal guardians who have signed their minor children's applications have assumed the financial responsibility for materials charged out to their children's cards; therefore, parents or legal guardians will be provided with specific information about their minor children's library records when materials are overdue or lost.