

PRIVACY OF THE PATRON'S RECORD

The freedom of the individual to read whatever he wishes and to use or borrow whatever available items he pleases from the collection of a public library must be kept inviolable. That freedom necessarily includes the user's right to be secure in the knowledge that whatever choice of library materials he may make shall be his own private concern, a matter of privacy not subject to invasion by any agency or person.

Therefore it is and shall be the policy of the East Meadow Public Library that all records of the names of users of the library and of any library materials that they may choose to use or borrow, or that they have used or borrowed in the past, are confidential.

The New York State Confidentiality Law (§4509 N.Y.C.P.L.R.) protects the privacy rights of library users. This law prohibits the release of any information relating the name of a person and his/her library use without a properly executed subpoena from a court of law. Under this law, library staff cannot:

- Tell a third party whether a person has a library card
- Tell a parent what his/her child has borrowed, even if it is overdue
- Send a reserve notice or overdue reminder on a postcard
- Reveal the nature of someone's reference question to another person

This law makes it quite clear that a person's library use habits are strictly private; there are no exceptions for children or anyone else. Patrons who do not want their children's records to remain private should check out their children's items on their own cards.

This shall in no way inhibit nor restrict the preparation by the staff of mailing lists for normal library purposes, nor the preparation and dissemination of library statistical information.

Any request for disclosure of the name or the library transactions of any library user shall be referred immediately to the Library Director, who shall promptly notify the Board of Trustees.