

Ashland Public Library Privacy Policy

Your library account information is confidential.

The staff of Ashland Library respects every patron's right to privacy and supports patron confidentiality as stated in the Massachusetts General Laws, [Chapter 78, Section 7](#). As free and democratic institutions, libraries must protect the individual's right to have their reading patterns or reference questions remain a private matter. The practical ramifications of such a policy often mean that a staff member responding to an inquiry concerning a family member's or another person's reserves or circulation records is prohibited from sharing those records.

How does this affect your library visit? Please read on for frequently-asked questions concerning privacy and confidentiality issues.

Q: Can my spouse/friend/neighbor/family member pick up my reserve materials for me?

A: Yes, if you have given your library card to them, or if they have a copy of the hold pickup notification sent to the email address on their library account. We will also accept a library barcode displayed on a mobile device.

Q: Can you tell me what items are out or overdue on the card of my child (aged 10 years or younger)?

A: Yes, if you have the child's library card.

Q: Can you tell me what items are out or overdue on the card of my child (aged 11 or older)?

A: No, but we will be happy to email a list of those items to the card holder, or show you how the card holder can login from home to check their account.

Q: If I forget my library card, can I still pick up my reserved book?

A: Yes, if you bring in some other form of identification, or if you are able to answer a series of questions to confirm your identity.

Q: If my dad gives me his card and asks me to call the library to find out if there is a book on hold for him, would the library staff tell me?

A: If you have his card, we can tell you only that the book is here.

Q: If my neighbor gives me her library card and asks me to find out what books she has that are overdue, would the library staff do that for her and tell me?

A: No, but we can renew those books for her, unless one of them is on reserve for another patron, or we can email a copy of her library record to her. We can also accept payment from you on her behalf and then email her a receipt.

Q: Last week I requested three books for my son. We used his card, I think, but I stopped by today and all I have is my card. Can I pick up his books?

A: The books must be picked up using the card under which they were reserved. You may also pick up his books if you have a copy of the hold pickup notification sent to the email address on your son's library account. We will also accept a library barcode displayed on a mobile device. If you have a copy of the hold pickup notification, you may pick up his books.

Q: The email address in my library card record is not right, but I can't remember what our email address is. Could you check my husband's card and tell me what it is?

A: We are sorry, but the information in his patron record is confidential, but we can send out a test email to verify that the address you have given us is correct.

Your Child's Library Card

What Every Parent Should Know

The Ashland Library, in compliance with Massachusetts State Law and with [American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights](#), protects the privacy of library users. This means that the personal information and reading history of our card holders may not be shared with anyone but the library card holder, even if the card holder is a minor. We recognize that this policy can be challenging for parents who are trying to manage their children's library cards so here's some information we hope will help.

If your child is between the ages of 5-10: (roughly elementary school age)

- Your child may apply for a library card with a parent/guardian present.
- Proof of current address is required at the time the card is issued. (examples include: parent's driver's license, passport, state ID, piece of first class mail, car registration, signed lease)
- We will ask for an email address where notices will be mailed - generally with young children parents/guardians opt to use their email address for their child's card.
- A PIN is also set up at this time. The library card number and PIN may be used to login to the library card account to see what's currently checked out, place a hold, renew materials, or pay fines.

- Having both the library card number and the PIN is the best way for a parent/guardian to manage their child's account online.

If your child is between the ages of 10-13 (roughly middle school age)

- Your child may apply for a library card with a parent/guardian present, OR if they generally use the library alone, we will send a registration form home for a parent/guardian's signature.
 - NOTE: If your child returns a signed registration form to the library, they will need to provide proof of address – since most children this age do not have any form of ID, the easiest way is to bring a piece of mail that was received at the home address.
- We will ask for an email address where notices will be mailed – generally middle grade children still use a parent email for their cards, but increasingly younger users want to use their own email accounts.
 - NOTE: library cards may have more than one email address listed – all notices would be sent to both email accounts. This is a great tool to use to give your child increasing responsibility over their library account!
- A PIN is also set up at this time. The library card number and PIN may be used to login to the library card account to see what's currently checked out, place a hold, renew materials, or pay fines.

If your child is 13 or older

- Your child does not need your permission to register for a card.
- Proof of address is required. Acceptable forms of ID include a school photo ID and proof of current address. A piece of mail addressed to your child may be used for address verification.
- When the card is issued, we ask for an email address where any notices will be mailed. Middle and high school age children generally prefer to use their own email address but a parent email may be added with the child's permission (all notices for the account are then sent to both emails).
- A PIN is also set up at this time. The library card number and PIN may be used to login to the library card account to see what's currently checked out, place a hold, renew materials, or pay fines.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Children may request to change their PIN number/email address for their account. If this happens, parents should ask their child for updated information in order to access the account – the Library staff cannot access a library card PIN and will not reset the PIN without the child present.

In order to access your child's library card information (regardless of the child's age)

When library cards are issued, a PIN is established for the account. The library card number and PIN may be used to access library account information online. If you want to access your child's library card information, write down their barcode number/PIN and keep it somewhere safe for when you want to log on to their account. Some of the things you can do online (24/7):

- See a list of what is currently checked out on the card
- Renew library materials (unless someone else is waiting for the item)
- Place reserves on materials,
- Download eBooks and eAudio books
- Pay overdue fines or lost book fees using a credit card

If you want to pick up reserves for your child (when your child is not present) or if you want to check out items on your child's card or pick up a reserve placed on a child's card (without the child present) you can do this in several ways:

- By bringing the child's library card with you. Since all new library cards are issued with a duplicate "key chain" card, many parents keep copies of all their children's cards on their key chains. Helpful hint: this works for spouse's cards as well
- By bringing a copy of the email which states that the item is available for pick-up. You may bring either a printed copy of the email or you may show the email via your smartphone.
- By loading copies of family library cards onto a card management smartphone app (such as Key Ring and Card Star)

Approved Board of Library Trustees 1/11/2022, to be reviewed **every five years** starting January 2027