**WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM**                                    **POLICY #11**

**Subject:** Privacy

**Application:** Customers and visitors

The Westchester Library System (WLS) and its member libraries are committed to protecting the privacy of our staff, donors, customers and other external contacts. The WLS privacy policy defines our commitment not to collect any personal information about our users when visiting WLS websites or registering for a program or a library card unless such users choose to provide such information. Any information provided will only be used to more effectively provide and better target library services throughout the County.

This confidentiality extends to information sought or received, materials consulted, borrowed, acquired; and includes database search records, circulation records, interlibrary loan records, and other personally identifiable uses of library materials, facilities or services.

WLS places account information on the secure portion of its computer system. For this reason, patrons are asked to input their barcode number and PIN each time they want to access their account information on the website.

### Cookies

Users accessing the WLS or member library websites will need to enable cookies[1] in order to access a number of resources available through WLS. WLS's servers use cookies solely to verify that a person is an authorized user of library resources or to facilitate web site functionality. WLS server will not employ cookies for advertising or marketing.

### Emails and Web Forms

Identifying information provided by e-mails or web forms will be used only for such purposes as are described at the point of collection (for example on a web form), such as to send information or provide library services, update membership records or to better target library services to meet constituent demands.

WLS or a member library may contact a patron to clarify a comment or question, to learn about customer satisfaction with library services or to deliver information regarding a library card account. To do so requires contact information provided by the patron. WLS will not use patron/customer emails for commercial purposes nor will it provide such information to external organizations.

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[1] A cookie is very small text file placed on your hard drive by a Web Page server. It is essentially your identification card, and cannot be executed as code or deliver viruses. It is uniquely associated with the computer on which it is placed.

## Information Collected and Stored Automatically

WLS does not collect information that identifies individual patrons. However, when a patron visits a WLS website to browse through the web site, read pages, or download information, certain information will be automatically gathered and stored about the visit to these pages:

1. The Internet domain (for example, "xcompany.com" if a private Internet access account, or "aschool.edu" if connected from a university) and IP address (an IP address is a number that is automatically assigned to a computer whenever it is connected to the Internet) from which access to the WLS web site is gained;

2. The type of browser and operating system used to access the WLS website;

3. The date and time of access to the website;

4. The pages visited and for how long; and

5. The address of the website from which the initial visit to the WLS or member library site was launched, if any.

WLS uses this information to help make its site more useful to visitors and to learn about the number of visitors to the site and the types of technology used. The data that is collected is not connected to a patron's personal information or identity.

## Links to Other Sites

WLS's websites contain links to other sites. WLS and our member libraries are not responsible for the privacy practices of other sites, which may be different from the privacy practices described in this policy.

Library users should be aware that WLS and its member libraries use third-party vendors to supply electronic services and content.  Patrons that choose to use these services are responsible for making themselves aware of the privacy policies of these providers before and while using those services.  WLS maintains a list of third-party service providers used by WLS that can be accessed through https://www.westchesterlibraries.org/about-wls/patron-privacy/.

## Customer Circulation Records

WLS member libraries use a computerized system to collect and track customer circulation records.  Each Library maintains information provided by our customers from the registration form they complete when they register for a library card. When an item is checked out, that item is then tied to that customer's record in the WLS system.  WLS and member libraries make every effort to break the link between a customer and their circulation activity as soon

as possible.  Records are maintained as needed to report anonymized statistics, collect debts and complete the successful return of borrowed items.  Patrons also have the option to extend retention of records to enable additional library account management features such as reading lists.

## Privacy & Confidentiality of Library Records

Library records that are deemed confidential are covered by New York State Law signed on June 13, 1988 (NYS CPL 4509).  These records are related to the circulation of library materials that contain names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of public, free association, school, college and university libraries and library systems, of this state, including but not limited to records related to the circulation of library materials, computer database searches, interlibrary loan transactions, reference queries, requests, or the use of audio-visual materials, films or records. These records shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except that such records may be disclosed upon the request or consent of the user or pursuant to subpoena, court order or where otherwise required by statute.

## Revisions

WLS reserves the right to change or modify this privacy statement at any time. If WLS revises this privacy statement, changes will be posted on the WLS homepage.

*Last approved:  September 29, 2020*