

MCLINC

Montgomery County Library & Information Network Consortium

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Your Right to Privacy

Libraries are committed to providing access to a wide range of information and ideas without restriction. By prioritizing privacy, libraries uphold their core values of intellectual freedom, confidentiality and the equitable provision of information and services to all individuals. Privacy ensures that any individual has the right to explore and access information freely without fear of judgement, surveillance or repercussions. Libraries are bound by laws and professional ethics to protect patron privacy. Pennsylvania state law ([24 Pa.C.S. 9375](#)) requires that all materials borrowed by a user of a library must be kept confidential and cannot be accessed by anyone except by a court in a criminal proceeding.

MCLINC (Montgomery County Library and Information Network Consortium) recognizes your right to privacy regarding the physical and electronic materials you borrow. This notice explains your privacy and confidentiality rights, and the steps MCLINC takes to respect and protect those rights when you use MCLINC library resources, either inside or outside your library. MCLINC resources in your library include:

- our Integrated Library System, a relational database we use to track materials owned, orders made, bills paid, and patrons who have borrowed, and due dates for library materials
- our library network
- access to the internet
- library computers

MCLINC makes this notice easy to find on its [Policies](#) page.

What information do we collect?

MCLINC collects only the data necessary for the services we provide. The data below is purged annually for cards unused for 7 years.

Data	How Long	Why
Name	REQUIRED as long as you are a patron of a MCLINC Library	To identify you
Date of Birth	REQUIRED as long as you are a patron of a MCLINC Library	To identify you
Address	REQUIRED as long as you are an MCLINC patron. We ask you to update this information every 3 years when you renew your library card.	To identify you and communicate with you about your library materials and requests.
Email Address	OPTIONAL. We ask you to update this information every 3 years when you renew your library card.	To communicate with you about your library materials and requests.

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Telephone Number (home and/or cell phone number)	REQUIRED. We ask you to update this information every 3 years when you renew your library card.	To communicate with you about your library materials and requests.
Cell Phone Carrier	OPTIONAL. We ask you to update this information every 3 years when you renew your library card.	To send text messages to you about your library materials and requests.
Borrowing History	OPTIONAL. You may opt to keep your Reading History when you register for a library card, or any time afterwards.	For your convenience.
Fine History	REQUIRED	For record-keeping purposes.

- MCLINC retains records of materials currently checked out; overdue materials until returned; fines paid, unpaid, and waived; current interlibrary loans; and outstanding holds requests. After a patron returns an item, the patron barcode number is retained on that item until it is checked out again and returned.

Who has access to my information?

Patrons give consent only to the collection of the data listed above when they register for a library card. MCLINC does not collect or retain your personally identifiable information without your consent. MCLINC will not give, sell or license your personal information to any third party without your consent, unless we are compelled to do so under the law or to comply with a court order. For administrative purposes, MCLINC may share information with specific third-party vendors of library services, such as those managing the library's databases or electronic collections. Only MCLINC-authorized employees have access to your personally identifying information, and they may not use it except for library-related work.

Do not let others use your library card or account. If you allow others to use your card or account, you have consented to share your data with that person. If a library card is lost or stolen, you must report this immediately to your library so that the lost or stolen card may be invalidated.

You may opt to have your library account linked with another individual, such as a member of your family, or parent and child. To link adult accounts, both parties need to be present with their library cards or IDs, and both parties must sign a Linked Accounts agreement.

Personally identifiable information will not be on any public circulation records. All notices for lost, overdue or reserved items will be sent in a sealed envelope to your physical address and/or to your personal email address.

Requests for information about materials associated with a patron account should be directed to the patron's local library. MCLINC cannot answer requests for any patron account information.

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What about our website, public and staff computers, and Wi-Fi?

Public computers are 'wiped' clean of data between sessions.

Parents and legal guardians must assume responsibility for their children's use of the Internet on library computers, as with other library materials. Library staff does not act in the place of a parent to determine which internet materials are appropriate for an individual child.

The MCLINC website uses HTTPS which stands for Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure. This is a way to securely send and receive information over the internet. All communications between your computer and the library website are encrypted and private.

Internet cookies are small pieces of data that websites store on your computer when you visit them. You can refuse to accept cookies, disable cookies, and remove cookies from your hard drive. However, this may result in a lack of access to some library services.

To use your library's Wi-Fi while on premises, patrons are required to accept the Wi-Fi Terms of Service. The only information available to the library is the amount of data used. MCLINC collects the internet address of equipment connected to our Wi-Fi but collects no data on the content of searching.

Do we have data and network security?

MCLINC maintains a network firewall to protect the integrity of the network. Antivirus software is on all public and staff computers throughout MCLINC and is updated regularly.

MCLINC has chosen to comply with the filtering provisions of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). All public computers and devices are filtered. When using the internet through your library's Wi-Fi access, Internet access is filtered.

MCLINC is aware that generative artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to analyze data, including images, statistics, speech, and other complex data types. While generative AI may be used by staff members for small administrative tasks, staff members do not give any AI access to personally identifying patron information.

How do we handle Third-party vendors?

All patron data is stored within MCLINC's integrated library system, Polaris, including name, library card number and PIN.

MCLINC will not share this data with any other 3rd party.

How do we handle requests from law enforcement?

MCLINC will not share library records with any government agency without a valid court order ([24 Pa.C.S. 9375](#)).

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Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years to make sure it is updated appropriately to reflect emerging technologies.

Approved by the MCLINC Board of Directors on 10/17/2025.