Bucks County Free Library

USE OF PATRON DATA IN LIBRARY ADVANCEMENT

Policy Statement

The Bucks County Free Library (BCFL) maintains an electronic database of its users as part of its automated circulation system. In addition to using the database to manage the flow of the collection, BCFL and consortium member libraries may use these files to build relationships and communicate with library patrons.

The library's intent is to enhance and improve awareness of our strategic goals, new and innovative services, achievements and fundraising opportunities.

In mailings, newsletters and requests for patron data, the libraries will provide an option for individuals to indicate if and how they prefer to receive library communications that are not related to circulation. BCFL and consortium member libraries will respect and honor these preferences and all electronic communications will include an option to unsubscribe.

Definitions

Library Advancement includes any and all marketing, public relations, fundraising and community outreach programs and activities designed to enhance public awareness. It also includes communications designed to secure contributions to further BCFL's mission to provide valuable library experiences to the residents of Bucks County.

Geocode is the data field in the patron record indicating the assigned or legal service area for the patron's address. *Home library* is the data field indicating the library where the patron registered for a library card.

A library user may have an affinity for either their assigned geocode library or their home library. BCFL and individual member libraries, may distribute communication to people whose records include either or both data fields pointing to their library.

Regulations

1. Patron records are confidential and may not be shared with outside organizations except for those libraries with membership in the Bucks County Library consortium. Patron records may not be shared with library friends groups, which are considered as outside organizations with respect to this policy and the law.

2. Requests to use records from the BCFL database must be approved by the BCFL CEO who serves as custodian of patron records and has both the authority and responsibility to approve or deny specific uses of the patron database on the merits of each individual request.

3. Library users are welcome to request communications from any library, regardless of geocode or home library. They may receive additional communications if they opt into a particular notification or service, or if they make a gift to a particular library.

4. Library staff will not keep records with personally identifiable information unless that information is necessary for a specific library project or program. Records and reports, such as mailing lists are treated as confidential, kept in a secure manner, and are destroyed when they are no longer needed.

5. User information will be accessed by library staff internally and with the staff of other libraries only as part of the necessary performance of their job duties.

6. From time to time, BCFL or a consortium member library, may purchase mailing lists from third parties such as the United States Postal Service. Information contained in these lists will be curated by the third party based on their current data and statistics. The use of these lists will take geocodes and patron preferences into account. These lists will not be shared with any outside organizations.

7. Use of outside data may result in a library unintentionally corresponding with a patron assigned to a different geocode or home library. Libraries using outside lists will make reasonable efforts to avoid communicating outside of their geocode or home library and will notify other libraries when their user base may be impacted by an outside mailing list.

8. Libraries that receive responses from patrons who clearly intended to communicate with a different library will promptly refer the patron to the correct library.

Adopted by the Board of Directors
July 18, 2006; November 14, 2017