

Bucks County Public Library

Development

USE OF PATRON DATA IN LIBRARY ADVANCEMENT

Policy Statement

The Bucks County Free Library maintains an electronic file of its users as part of its automated circulation system. In addition to using those files to manage the circulation of the collection held by libraries in Bucks County, BCFL may use these files for building relationships and communicating with library users in order to enhance and improve library services.

Definitions

Library Advancement includes any set of marketing, public relations, fundraising and community outreach programs and activities designed to enhance public awareness and secure contributions to further and fulfill the BCFL mission, which is to provide an exemplary library experience to the residents of Bucks County.

Regulations

1. Patron records are confidential in nature and may not be shared with outside organizations except for those libraries with membership in the Bucks County Library consortium. Consortium members may request patron records associated with their own specific geographic service areas.
2. BCFL will respect and follow patrons' wishes regarding if and how they prefer to receive library communications that are not related to circulation.
3. Files and reports used for library advancement purposes will not include patron borrowing or circulation information.
4. Library staff will not keep records with personally-identifiable information unless that information is necessary for a specific library-related project or program. Records and reports, such as mailing lists, must be kept in a secure manner and destroyed when they are no longer needed.

Procedures

1. In mailings, newsletters and/or requests for patron data, the library will provide an option for individuals to indicate their preferences regarding if and how they prefer to receive library communications that are not related to circulation.
2. Requests to use records from the BCFL database must be approved by the BCFL Executive Director who serves as custodian of patron records and will have both the authority and responsibility to authorize or deny specific uses of the patron database.
3. The Executive Director will inform the BCFL Board of Directors of requests to use the database.

Guidelines

1. The American Library Association (ALA) strongly recommends that libraries formally adopt a policy with regard to confidentiality of library patron records.
2. ALA Policy Manual 54.15—Code of Ethics, point 3, states that “Librarians must protect each user’s right to privacy with respect to information sought or received and to materials consulted, borrowed or acquired.”
3. Family education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 prevents schools from distributing students’ educational records to third parties without a student’s consent.
4. Pennsylvania State Law regarding library patron confidentiality (Statute 24 P.S. 4428 [IV]) states: *Records related to the circulation of library materials which contain the names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of the State Library or any local library which is established or maintained under any law of the Commonwealth or the library of any university, college or educational institution chartered by the Commonwealth or the library of any public school or branch reading room, deposit station or agency operated in connection therewith, shall be confidential and shall not be made available to anyone except by a court order in a criminal proceeding.*

Adopted by the Board of Directors July 18, 2006