

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION LIBRARY POSITION STATEMENT ON THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF LIBRARY RECORDS

The members of the American Library Association,* recognizing the right to privacy of library users, believe that records held in libraries which connect specific individuals with specific resources, programs or services, are confidential and not to be used for purposes other than routine record keeping: i.e., to maintain access to resources, to assure that resources are available to users who need them, to arrange facilities, to provide resources for the comfort and safety of patrons, or to accomplish the purposes of the program or service. The library community recognizes that children and youth have the same rights to privacy as adults.

Libraries whose record keeping systems reveal the names of users would be in violation of the confidentiality of library record laws adopted in many states. School librarians are advised to seek the advice of counsel if in doubt about whether their record keeping systems violate the specific laws in their states. Efforts must be made within the reasonable constraints of budgets and school management procedures to eliminate such records as soon as reasonably possible.

With or without specific legislation, school librarians are urged to respect the rights of children and youth by adhering to the tenets expressed in the ALA Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records, Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights and the ALA Code of Ethics.

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*ALA Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records