

LIBRARY CARD REGISTRATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Registration for a New or Replacement Card

The Library staff will request positive identification showing name and current legal address of anyone registering for a library card or a replacement library card. The first library card is issued free of charge. A replacement library card will cost the patron \$1.00.

2. Confidentiality of Library Records

The policy of the J. V. Fletcher Library is not to reveal the borrowing records, reserve or fine records to any person other than the owner of the library card to which they are assigned. The library recognizes that all circulation records, records identifying names of users with specific materials and all library registration files identifying names, addresses, and telephones with a library-assigned registration number, are confidential. All staff members must support this policy of confidentiality. No records can be made available to any inquiries, governmental or otherwise, unless a subpoena has been served by a court of competent jurisdiction and the library administration has consulted with legal counsel to determine if it is proper to release the requested information. (See related POLICY ON PRIVACY AND REQUESTS FOR PATRON INFORMATION).

3. Parental Access to Records

All patron card activity is confidential –this is even true for very young children. A child essentially experiences his or her first equal “adult” status in the act of acquiring a personal library card and is afforded the same privacy as adults. Thus, overdue notices and printouts of books checked out are mailed directly to youngsters (even though parents may be legally responsible for the actions of the minors in their household). Parents are encouraged to weigh the child’s delight in the first library card against the knowledge that according to state law, parents may not have direct access to a child’s borrowing record.

Parents are encouraged to discuss with library staff the process of obtaining a PIN (Personal Identification Number) at the library, so that a card holder (adult or child) can access his/her borrowing record privately at a library or via an online computer. Additionally, families may elect to use a shared email address to receive notification of reserves, overdue notices or bills from the J. V. Fletcher Library and MVLC member libraries.

4. Minors’ Borrowing (Under 18 years of Age) Because of the confidential nature of library records, parents, guardians and caregivers are encouraged to be partners and participants in the material selection process of minors in their care. Library staff are available to provide guidance, insight and counsel on various library collections, but encourage parental discretion and participation in the individual selection process.

Librarians and Library governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Thus, parents—and only parents—have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children to library resources. Parents who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children.

5. Responsibility for Charges accrued to a Library Card

The J. V. Fletcher Library does not charge overdue fines to patrons. However, patrons will be responsible for paying the replacement cost of lost library materials checked out on their library card. Patrons will also be charged the replacement copy of library materials returned in a seriously damaged or defaced condition. In the event of a lost library card, patrons will be responsible for up to \$25.00 for library materials that have been checked out on their card through unauthorized use; patrons are urged to report their lost library cards as soon as possible. Patrons will receive a receipt for payment made for lost or damaged items; in the event that materials are found and returned, refund will be made upon presentation of that receipt.

Voted and Approved 4/6/81; Revised 9/4/90; 10/7/02; 1/31/05; 12/5/2011.

This policy is based on recommendations of the American Library Association and Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 78, Section 7 which states, *That part of the records of a public library which reveals the identity and intellectual pursuits of a person using such library shall not be a public record as defined by clause Twenty-sixth of section seven of chapter four.*