



## **Patron Privacy Policy**

Adopted: 01/09/2025

Last Revised:

### **Confidentiality of Library Records**

The Walworth-Seely Public Library is committed to protecting patron confidentiality, including the borrowing information of patrons, library space or equipment use, and their right to access information that is controversial, sensitive, or personal.

Therefore, the Walworth-Seely Public Board of Trustees adopts the following stance on library records in accordance with New York State Civil Practice Law and Rules § 4509:

*The ethical responsibility of library employees, as well as New York State law, protects the privacy of library users. Records related to the circulation of library materials, the patron database, computer database searches, interlibrary loan transactions, reference queries, requests for photocopies of library materials, title reserve requests, or the use of audio-visual materials shall be confidential and library employees shall not disclose them except to the extent necessary for proper library operation, upon request or consent of the user, pursuant to subpoena or court order, or where otherwise required by law.*

The Confidentiality of Library Records will be periodically evaluated in relation to all local, state, and federal laws and regulations as well as the American Library Association Code of Ethics and ALA Library Bill of Rights by the Library Director and Board of Trustees.

### **Employee Responsibilities**

In working at Walworth-Seely Public Library, employees will learn things about the Library and our patrons which are proprietary or confidential and the Library has a legitimate and substantial business interest in maintaining the confidentiality of such information. Every employee of the Library has a professional and ethical responsibility to treat this information as privileged and to ensure such information is not improperly or accidentally disclosed. Except as required in the performance of their duties for the Library, employees may not use or disclose any proprietary information such as patron lists, personal identifiable information, or use of library space or equipment unless required by warrant or law.



## **Recording Policy**

As a public library, the Walworth-Seely Public Library is obligated to ensure information access, patron privacy, and library service.

To help fulfill those obligations, it is the policy of the Walworth-Seely Public Library to honor state and federal law and policy with respect to photographing, recording, broadcasting, and streaming images of the premises, patrons, and employees while on library property (for the sake of clarity, all such activity is referred to in this document as "Recording").

This policy will be used by the Walworth-Seely Public Library to address concerns related to non-employees photographing, recording and/or broadcasting/streaming images on library property. This includes whether or not those conducting the stream or making the recording call it a "First Amendment Audit" or claim it is for other purposes.

The Library will allow all Recording consistent with its obligations and mission. The Library reserves the right at all times to refuse any Recording that will negatively impact safety, patron privacy, employee work conditions, and/or routine library operations.

## **Requests to Record**

Whenever possible, individuals or media outlets who wish to engage in Recording should contact the Director to arrange, at least two business days in advance, how such Recording can be done without risking a breach of the library's ethics, its obligation to safeguard patron privacy, and to ensure a respectful environment for library employees. This may be done by calling (315) 986-1511 or emailing [walworthlibrarydirector@owwl.org](mailto:walworthlibrarydirector@owwl.org). When contacting the Library with this need, please be ready to discuss what content is needed, and how to adapt that need to the library's ethical and operational priorities, if necessary.

Individuals or media outlets who wish to engage in Recording on a more immediate basis, please contact the Director, or their designee working at the time, **as soon as possible**. This may be done by calling (315) 986-1511 or emailing [walworthlibrarydirector@owwl.org](mailto:walworthlibrarydirector@owwl.org). Just like recording with more notice, those with urgent requests should be ready to discuss what access will meet your needs, and to adapt your needs to the library's ethical and operational priorities, including not being able to grant a same-day request. Staff will direct all requests to record or give



statements on behalf of the library to the Library Director and/or Board President, per the Employee Handbook.

For individuals or media outlets who wish to engage in Recording without notifying the library in advance, please know that any Recording activity that risks negatively impacting safety, patron privacy, employee work conditions, and/or routine library operations, or a violation of this policy, our Patron Code of Conduct, and/or our Meeting Space Use Policy will result in a requirement to cease Recording.

As with any other ongoing potential violation of Library policy, any individuals or media outlets who, after being asked to stop engaging in Recording, does not cease Recording, will be told to leave Library property, pending further action under any applicable policy.

#### **Recording with Permission in the Library (Commercial)**

Requests to Record in the Library for commercial purposes (movies, advertisements, documentaries) will be confirmed by a contract, based on the project, and may include insurance requirements and indemnification.

#### **Recording with Permission in the Library (Non-commercial)**

Requests to Record in the Library for non-commercial purposes, including journalism from credentialed journalists, will be confirmed with this permission whenever time allows:

*Thank you for working with the Library to explore recording/streaming/broadcasting in our space ("Recording"). As you know, any Recording in the Library must be conducted safely, without risking a breach of the library's ethics, with attention to its obligation to safeguard patron privacy, and in a way that respects our employees and doesn't disrupt routine operations. To ensure these safeguards, we met on DATE, and agreed that you could record in [AREA] during the hours of [TIMESPAN]. You confirmed that the end project will be a non-commercial recording (commercial recordings are subject to additional requirements, including insurance). Thank you so much for your cooperation.*

#### **"First Amendment Audits", Harassing Behavior, and Other Unannounced Recording**

The Library recognizes and honors that as a public entity, the public has a right to access information about the Library. This includes being subject to the Freedom of Information Law ("FOIL") and the Open Meetings Law ("OML"). To that end, the Library's policies and board materials are on our website, and the public may attend our meetings as required by law.



Further, the Library recognizes and honors that not all journalists are credentialed by formal media outlets, and the public has the right to know about the operations of the Library.

However, the Library's Board of Trustees also has the right to set the hours and conditions needed to operate the library, and this includes barring any activity that would impact safety, patron privacy, employee work conditions, and/or routine library operations, or a violation of a library policy. To that end, this policy, protocol, permission language, response script, and posted notice will be used to promote requests for access to Record on the premises, and to address any unauthorized Recording on the premises that risks mission and obligations.